

A N Theology vol. 11
A P P E A L

To the GENUINE

Records and Testimonies

O F

Heathen and Jewish WRITERS;

B E I N G

F U L L E V I D E N C E

F O R T H E

TRUTH of the *Christian Religion*, and its
Primitive Doctrines.

In Several CONFERENCES.

P A R T I.

The Truth at the Bottom is plainly this: All the great Things that modern Deists affect to say of Right Reason, as to its Sufficiency in discovering the Obligations and Motives of Morality, is only a Pretence to be made use of, when they are opposing Christianity.

Dr. Clarke in his Boyle's Lectures.

Refrain not to speak, when there is Occasion to do good: Strive for the Truth unto Death, and the Lord shall fight for thee.

[*Ecclus. iv. 23, 28.*]

L O N D O N :

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A P P E A L

IN THE MATTER OF

THE [illegible] [illegible]

THE [illegible] [illegible]



IN WITNESS WHEREOF

I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of the said Court of Chancery at the City of London this [illegible] day of [illegible] 18[illegible]

To Her GRACE

THE

Dutcheſs-Dowager of St. *Albans*

(An Eminent Example of true Piety)

The following

TREATISE,

With all poſſible Reſpect,

Is Dedicated by

Her Very Humble Servant,

T. D.

TO HER GRACE
THE
THE
PREFACE.

I*T would be very absurd, to make the least Apology for publishing the following Sheets; which are intended for the Service of true Primitive Christianity. 'Tis certain, the Spirit of Infidelity is gone forth, and seems to rage with uncommon Violence amongst us: But, alas! where's the controuling Power,* that has best served, in several Ages of the Christian Church, to rebuke it? I say no more; but the Power is no longer felt, nor heard of in our Sion. 'Tis true, an eminent Prelate has done Wonders that Way: God prosper his Labours! But in the Opinion of most, 'tis too sore an Evil, we labour under, to be cur'd by a single Hand; how skilful and masterly soever it may be: However, since this is the Method our Superiors judge best for us to take, I have ventured to inlist myself under his Lordship's Protection; and to contribute my Mite, in a glorious Cause, which all good People must have at Heart: And let our Adversaries but follow the Rule, which they prescribe to others, in using those Faculties which God has given*
us

* A National Synod.



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us to judge with, after the best Manner we can, the End will be truly answered; and Victory soon appear to be on our Side: The Facts appeal'd to in the present Tract, (supported by unquestionable Authority) are an undeniable Proof that the Gospel-Revelation came from God; and consequently, that our Reason alone is not a sufficient Guide to eternal Happiness: For if the Premises are true, then the Inference which the same eminent Prelate has made, must be true also, viz. "When by the Help of our Reason Revelation becomes so establish'd; no Suggestion either against the Need of such a Revelation, or against our Obligation to receive it, ought to make any Impression upon us: For indeed to suppose that God makes a Revelation that is needless, is a direct Impeachment of his Wisdom; and to affirm that we are not bound to attend to, and receive it, when made, is no less an Impeachment of his Authority." Our Deists and other Reason-Mongers do indeed make a great Noise at present about Morality; not considering, how much they are beholden, as well as many old Philosophers were, to the Holy Scriptures themselves, for the best Things they say about it. 'Tis certain, the Apostate Julian understood much better what Morality is, than the infamous Set of our bungling Free-thinkers: He was for ingrafting into his subtle, pernicious System, even the Order and external Discipline of the Christian Church, as well

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well as those Graces and Virtues that distinguish'd its Members from the rest of the World: But those among our selves, who wou'd be thought to refine upon Julian's Schemes, are really confounding the very Notions that Mankind has ever had of the Being and Attributes of God: For whilst they are very copious (shall I say lavish?) in extolling his Goodness, the better to secure (as they imagine) a full Swing in Prophaneness and Debauchery, they are divesting him of his Justice and Holiness; nay, so very short and defective are they in their New-fangled Scheme, that the very Name of Repentance is not allow'd to have any Share in it; and no other Rule is left us to walk by, but our own corrupted Reason. God, in his due Time, deliver us from such destructive Schemes! destructive, whether in regard to Church or State; for they naturally resolve themselves into Libertinism and downright Atheism; and there is no one Maxim better establish'd than this, That where there is no true Fear of God, there can be no true Allegiance paid to Man.

In another Tract (which, God willing, will soon follow this) the Reader will find that remarkable Verse in St. John, There are three that bear Witness in Heaven, &c. [1 Ep. v. 7.] fully vindicated from the many Cavils and Objections rais'd against it; and the Genuineness of the Text prov'd indisputably; I shou'd think, beyond all Contradiction. Providence, it seems, has been pleas'd

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pleas'd to bring to Light a Manuscript about twelve hundred Years old, found in the Library at Verona, a few Years ago, [1720.] taken Notice of, as lost, by Dr. Cave, written by that able Senator Aurelius Cassiodorus, intitled, *Complexiones in Epistolas, &c.* publish'd by Maffei, (well known to the learned World,) with his own excellent Annotations; and the whole is supported with all the Authority that an obstinate Heretick can require: For it appears from several Places in this Work, that Cassiodorus did use another Version than that of St. Jerom, where the Verse has been suppos'd to have been foisted in: And 'tis as evident, that this Verse was not only read in the Copies belonging to the African Church, but in those also the most ancient and most correct in the Roman or Western Churches. To this will be added another Sort of Proof for establishing the same Text, given us by the late learned Dr. Cave, Canon of Windsor, being Part of his *Historia Literaria*, but is yet in Manuscript. The Passage was occasion'd by the Doctor's Observations upon Lucian's *Philopatris*; and as he seems to have manag'd it in a Manner different from other Writers, so perhaps more for the Advantage of the Text he defended.

I have nothing more to add, than to remind every good Christian, how much it behoves them, in these perillous Days, to be frequent at the Throne of Grace, in behalf of that excellent Religion they profess; that
God

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God wou'd bless the Labours of such who do or shall go forth in its Defence; in keeping People's Minds from being toss'd to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine, and in getting their Hearts establish'd in the Saving Truths of the Gospel. This is promoting true Religion: And 'tis thus our Church has taught us to pray (God hear our Petitions!) that we may hold the Unity of our Faith in the Bond of Peace, and in Righteousness of Life. Amen.

T. D.

CON

CONFERENCE I.

A. **S**IR, well met: You are welcome into the Country; I hope you are now come to make some Stay amongst us.

B. Sir, I am glad to see you well: As to my Stay here, 'twill be (as usual) during the long Vacation; and then Business calls me to Town again.

A. I am sorry, you can't give us more of your Company; for our *Monthly Meetings* in these Parts have suffer'd pretty much by your Absence. The *Society* are much indebted to you for your good Instructions, and are very sensible of your Abilities to serve them in the common Cause of Christianity: However, they are satisfy'd, as I am, that you make the best Amends for the Loss of your Company, by your constant Attendance on the greater Society above, for promoting those Ends which they and we have so much at heart.

B. I suppose you mean the *Society for propagating Christian Knowledge*, &c. Some thing or other has diverted my Thoughts another Way: I have not been amongst 'em a great while.

B.

A. What.

A. What say you? Do you only *suppose* I mean — I could not have thought, there had been any need of *explaining* my self; and I am very sorry to hear you now mention that *Society*, with so much Coolness and Indifferency.

B. To deal frankly with you; I am now become a Member of *another Society*; and they are Men of a quite different *Stamp*. Let me tell you; 'tis a Society that is justly distinguish'd by their Politeness, Learning, and good Reasoning; 'tis *there* that I have associated my self, and I am resolv'd to continue a Member, unless it can be shewn, that I am in an Error, by being of this *new Opinion*.

A. If this be your Case, I'll venture to say thus much to you at present, that it very nearly behoves you to make a speedy, serious, and impartial Enquiry, whether this *new Opinion* of yours be well grounded, or no; for if it be not, the *Error*, you'll easily agree with me, is not of an *indifferent* Nature, as in other Speculations it may be; but an *Error* the most fatal in its Consequence: For (if I guess right) your new *Fraternity* are so far from distinguishing themselves in the *Manner* you represent them, that they are every Day abusing that *Reason*, which God has given them; and that also to serve the worst Purposes, in rejecting the *Gospel-Revelation*, the Means of Grace, and the Hopes of Glory. But lest I should mistake you, and charge further than you and your polite *Fraternity*

nity are guilty, please to explain your self, in what this *new Opinion* of yours does consist.

B. The *Opinion* I am now of, has been lately very fully stated by our *Society*, in a Book, call'd, *Christianity as old as the Creation*, &c. I don't find, but the Book's well receiv'd; and Encouragement enough given for another Volume to follow (as promis'd) in due Time. Some of us had lately the Curiosity to *herd* our selves (as we call it) amongst the *Country Clergy* at a certain *Bishop's Visitation*, where the Book was indeed plentifully rail'd at, and a general Indignation shewn at its being publish'd in such a *pompous Manner*; they complain'd very much of the *Decline* of *Orthodoxy*, and inveigh'd pretty heartily against some of their *own Order*, as if they were much of the same *Opinion* with our selves; which (I must confess) gave a secret Pleasure; and it was much fear'd, they said, that in a little Time these *Opinions* might be defended from the *Pulpit*. Thanks to our Superiors (thought I) for such a generous Indulgence as is now shewn to *Free-Thinkers*. Our late Brother *Toland* did some Years ago congratulate *only* the *City of London*, * (but the Happiness is now almost *universal*) *That there was scarce a Way of honouring the DEITY known any where, but was either already allow'd, or might be safely exercis'd among THEM*; and 'tis from this Freedom, that *Truth* makes its Way in the World.

B 2

A, You

* See his Dedication prefix'd to Mr. Harrington's Works.

A. You are so very full of these mistaken Notions of *Liberty*, that you forget the Question I put to you. I desire once more, you will either in your own Words, or in those of your *Fraternity*, as deliver'd in that pompous Book you just mention'd, let me know in what this *new Opinion* of yours does consist. You rightly observe, there is *Liberty* enough to speak, write, and publish what you please; and for my own Part, I desire no Quarter at your Hands: Defend your *new Opinion* as well as you can: But first let me know rightly what it is.

B. To speak then without any Reserve; I cannot admit of any such Thing as you call *Revelation*, otherwise than as 'tis consistent with *Natural Religion*: Where *they* are so consistent, I readily embrace any Part of it; but if you talk of *Revelation* differing from *Natural Religion*, such *Revelation* I reject; for to make such a *Difference*, supposes, that the same infinite Being has given *two* independent Rules for the Government of human Actions. This must be the Case, when *Revelation* is thus magnified, and *positive* Duties enjoin'd, which Reason knows nothing of: So that my Opinion is, that if we use *those Faculties*, which God has given us to judge with, *after the best Manner we can, the End is answer'd for which God gave them, and our Conduct fully justify'd.*

A. I have carefully read your pompous Book in *Quarto*; and, I confess, 'tis admirably well calculated for the *Propagation of Infidelity* amongst

us : There's a great deal of Address, Dexterity, and *Politeness*, (as you say of your new Fraternity,) in adapting the Doctrines contain'd in it, to the Lusts and Passions of Men, to a deprav'd *Understanding*, and a corrupted *Will* ; and if you are resolved to inlist yourself under such *Leaders*, I think you are much in the Right of it, to quit your old *Society*, and not concern yourself any farther about the *Propagation of Christianity*. I observe you speak in the very Words that are used by your Fraternity; and you seem to be pretty well versed in this *new Book*, that has given such a Turn to your Thoughts about *Religion*. But, pray, explain yourself what you mean by that Part of *Revelation*, that may be admitted by you?

B. I think it needs little farther explaining : My Meaning is, that *natural* and *true-reveal'd* Religion do only differ in the *Manner* of their being convey'd to us : When any other *Difference* is made, and Reason assures us there is such *Difference*, such Part of Religion is not to be received as *Revelation*, but to be rejected as *Superstition* : So that all the Distinction that our Fraternity think needs be made between *natural* and *reveal'd* Religion, is that of *internal* and *external* Revelation : In both of them we must use those Faculties, as I said before, which God has given us to judge with, *after the best Manner we can* ; and consequently Reason must be a sufficient Guide in Matters of Religion, without having

having Recourse to any other sort of *Revelation*, such as our *Reason* is a Stranger to.

A. Your Distinction of *internal* and *external* Revelation, puts me in Mind of Mr. *Lock's* Distinction in this Matter; and since you Gentlemen pay so great a Deference to his Opinion, methinks, it ought to have its due Weight with you. — “ *Reason*, says he, is *natural Revelation*, whereby the eternal Father of Light, and “ Fountain of all Knowledge, communicates to “ Mankind that Portion of Truth, which He has “ laid within the *Reach* of their natural Facul- “ ties: *Revelation* is *natural Reason enlarg'd* by “ a new Set of Discoveries communicated by “ God *immediately*, which Reason vouches the “ Truth of by the Testimony and Proof it gives, “ that they come from God.” And, let me tell you, my old Friend, these few Lines of Mr. *Lock* destroy entirely all your great Volume in *Quarto*. I readily agree with you in one Thing you said before, and which you just now repeated, *that we must use those Faculties which God has given us to judge with, after the best Manner we can*: nay, to *examine* Things, and then act upon the Evidence that arises from such Examination, is, I take it, our *Duty*; and if Mr. T——, and the rest of your Fraternity had *used those Faculties which God has given 'em to judge with, after the best Manner they can*, (I use their own Words, as you have done,) they could never have perswaded themselves to write as they do when the most important Concerns of Religion

were

were the Subject, in such a vain, loose, and trifling Manner; knowingly and wilfully abusing and perverting the *primitive* Writers, as well as the most eminent *Divines* of our own Nation, in a very scandalous Manner. I will venture therefore to affirm, that if we use our Faculties *after the best Manner we can*, they will necessarily lead us to acknowledge the Truth of the *Gospel Revelation*: So that your Book, in the main, is proving what *none deny*, if by *Reasoning* you mean, that Men must one Way or other *examine* Things; for without such Use of our Faculties, we never can truly come at the Knowledge of the *Gospel-Revelation*, nor without *examining* can we judge of the Consequences that naturally follow upon such *Revelation* made to us. But will you therefore say, that our Reason or Faculties direct us to *judge*, or draw such a Consequence as you do, that there are no *Truths* in *Nature* and *Religion* to be admitted by us, but such as our *deprav'd* Understandings can comprehend? Does our *Reason* tell us, that infinite Wisdom and Power ought thus to be limited in his Dealings with his Creatures? So far from it, that if we look out into the *natural* World, we every Day see our *Assent* is requir'd to many Things in *Fact* true, which yet our Faculties will never enable us to give any tolerable Account of. * I gratefully receive (says Mr. Lock) and rejoice in the Light of *Revelation*, which sets me at Rest in many Things, the Manner whereof my poor Reason can by no Means

make out to me. Here's Humility! an excellent Virtue, that your present Fraternity would do well to copy after; you see it was the necessary Result of *Free-thinking* in him, and will always be so, when 'tis rightly stated. *We must consult our Reason*, says he, *and by it examine, whether it be a Revelation from God, or no.* And if Reason finds it to be revealed from God, Reason then declares for it, as much as for any other Truth, and makes it one of her Dictates. If you can't join then with Mr. Lock, produce your Arguments; and let the Christian Religion stand or fall by its own Merits: But then let your Arguments be produc'd with an honest Mind, free from that notorious *Insincerity*, that runs through most of the *Quotations* in your new Book; and forbear withal bantering, or being ridiculous in an Affair of the last Consequence. In Truth, I much fear *Insincerity* and *Jesting* will not be so easily parted with, by you *Free-thinkers*; for such Methods are the main Strength of your Cause, and your Leaders know very well, it serves to make the deepest Impression on the *Unthinking* and *Ludicrous*, that is, the greatest Part of Mankind.

B. I own, I did suspect *Insincerity* in some *Quotations*, when I first read the Book; and I ever dislik'd *Jesting*, or being knowingly impertinent in the Business of Religion. 'Tis true what Mr. Lock says, (and I shall by no Means oppose it,) *when Reason once finds it to be a Revelation from God*, 'tis our Business to submit. But then,

Sir,

Sir, *how* shall our Reason find it out to be so; this with me is the great Difficulty. If you can produce that *Chain of Evidences*, as some talk of, which shall be so plain and forcible, as that they shall not fail to convince every *unprejudic'd Mind*, (as, I do assure you, *mine* is at present,) that the *Gospel Revelation* (all that we now have under that Name) was *from God*, I will not only acquiesce, but farther acknowledge to you, that the Inference, which an eminent *Prelate* * has lately made, is very just and cogent, *viz.* "That when
 " by the Help of our Reason, Revelation be-
 " comes so established; no Suggestion, either a-
 " gainst the *Need* of such a Revelation, or against
 " our *Obligation* to receive it, ought to make any
 " Impression upon us: For indeed to suppose,
 " that God makes a Revelation that is *needless*,
 " is a direct Impeachment of his *Wisdom*; and
 " to affirm, that we are not bound to attend to
 " and receive it, when made, is no less an Im-
 " peachment of his *Authority*." But still, as I said before, the *Difficulty* with me is this, *how* we can, by the Help of our Reason, or a right Use of those Faculties which God has given us to judge with, attain to a *certain Knowledge* of the *Truth* of those *Facts*, which you call Proofs of the *Gospel Revelation*? Or, to say all in a few Words, where are those *credible Witnesses*, that our Reason will tell us, we may and ought to rely on for the *Truth* of these Things?

C

A. Should

* Bishop of London's Second Pastoral Letter.

A. Should it be supposed, that we had not *credible Witnesses* to rely on; yet taking it for granted, that there were such Persons as the *Apostles*, (a *Fact* as clear, as that there were such Persons as *Augustus* and *Tiberius Cæsar*,) I appeal to your own Reason, or to *those Faculties which God has given you to judge with, after the best Manner you can*, whether such Persons as the *Apostles* of Christ, and in their Circumstances, could possibly be guilty of *Forgery* or *Imposture*? Whether whole Societies of disinterested, persecuted Christians, could be deceived or mistaken in the *Authors* of those *Histories*, and those *Epistles* they had so lately receiv'd, and on which they set such an inestimable Value? Whether those Books, so highly esteemed, so universally handled, so publickly read, so often transcrib'd, quoted, and expounded, so *jealously guarded* by contending Parties, could ever be *materially altered*, or possibly be corrupted, as *Mr. Whiston* has groundlessly asserted 'em to be in the Days of *Barbocab*, (about the End of the first, or Beginning of the second Century,) the better to serve his Purpose, relating to the Apostolical Constitutions? Notwithstanding the Efforts of such Men, this is the truly *Primitive Religion* that is now established amongst ourselves; and it highly behoves our Governors to consider, whether such a Religion, as recommends *Justice* and *Unity*, *Peace* and *Civil Obedience*, *Temperance*, *Industry* and *Fidelity*, should, in Point of Honour and Interest, be prophan'd, vilify'd, and set at Nought,

Nought, either by such Hereticks, or such a Set of *Free-thinkers*, as you love to call yourselves; and yet, after all your boasted Reasoning, you don't offer to introduce any better Religion instead of the *Christian*: The Truth is, *Free-thinking*, you fancy, will justify *Free-living*. There's a Fear and Dread of religious Truths; or, as Dr. *Clarke** has very well observed: " In " the *Manners* of most of you it is too plain " and apparent, that absolute *Libertinism* is the " Thing you really aim at; and however their " *Creed* (says he) may pretend to be the Creed " of *Deists*, yet almost always their *Practice* is " the Practice of very *Atheists*.

B. You seem to grow warm; but Warmth, you know, is of no Service to any Cause. I think you said just now, that it could not well admit of a *Doubt*, (for the Reasons you have assign'd,) whether the *Epistles* and *Gospels* could be *materially* alter'd or corrupted. Now, this *Doubt*, I own, I have, and it sticks with me, notwithstanding the Reasons you have given; and therefore this is the main Point that I shall insist on. I don't suspect the *Apostles* guilty of *Forgery* or *Imposition*, nor do I deny that their *Works* were highly valuable for many Years: But since there have been many *pious Frauds* amongst the *contending Parties*, (you mention'd) in After-Ages, how can we be certain, that these *Epistles* and *Gospels* have not been *materially* alter'd or corrupted? Or, as I said before, where

* In his *Boyle's Lectures*.

are those *credible Witnesses* to be met with, which our *Reason* will tell us, we may safely rely on for the Certainty of the *Gospel Revelation*, as 'tis now received in this Kingdom?

A. I hope, Sir, you will readily allow, that there were no *pious Frauds* among *Heathens* or *Jews*, in regard to the *Christian Religion* and its *Doctrines*: What think you then of those Persons, that were the avow'd *Enemies* of the *Christian Religion* in general: Such as *Cornelius Tacitus*, *Celsus*, *Prophyrus*, and a long List besides of such learned and observing *Heathens*, whose Works are *genuine*, and their Evidence not liable to any Objection? What say you, if I *appeal* to these Men, and some *Jews* also, as *credible Witnesses* of the Truth of these Things? I desire therefore, that their *Testimonies* may be heard touching any such *Doctrines*, or Points of *Faith*, or any *Facts*, as they now stand recorded in the *Epistles* and *Gospels*, such as you shall please to question the Truth of: And, as I don't doubt but their *Testimony* will corroborate the *Authority* of the ancient *Fathers* of the Church in these Matters, (where you seem to object your *pious Frauds*,) so I am perswaded, they will prove to be *full Evidence*, that the *Epistles* and *Gospels* have not been *materially* altered or corrupted.

B. You surprize me very much; and if you can make out your Point, the Surprize will be highly agreeable: There certainly can be no Objection to the *Credibility* of such *Witnesses*; but

but on the contrary, (as 'tis observed and allow'd of in our Courts of Justice,) the *Evidence* is always much stronger, and more regarded, that comes from the Mouth of an *Adversary*.

A. It was for this Reason, that the *Fathers* in the early Times of Christianity, took an especial Care to corroborate the Doctrines of their Religion, by the *Evidence* which they alledged out of the most eminent *Heathen Writers*. By this Means they often furnished themselves with Weapons out of their Enemies own Quarters, to defend the Truth of the Christian Religion. *Clemens of Alexandria*, and *Origin* his Scholar, were remarkably happy and successful that Way; and *Lactantius*,* the Christian *Cicero*, was so sensible of the Advantage that *Christianity* might receive by such a Method, that he forms a Plan whereupon to proceed, and advises the making *Extracts* out of *Heathen Writers*, touching such Things as they had said conformable to the Holy Scriptures, and then reducing them into one Body or System for the common Good of Christianity.

B. I perceive then, the Method you propose is not altogether *new*: However 'tis what I approve of, and therefore desire you would proceed. I am sorry, I am not so well vers'd in the *Classick* Authors, as I ought to be at this Time; but I think, I know enough, not to be easily *impos'd on* in these Matters; and besides,
I have

* Instit. Lib. vii. Cap. 7.

have that good Opinion of you, that there will be no Attempt to reconvert me *that Way*.

A. Let my old Friend rest satisfy'd, that I will deal with him in this Affair with the greatest *Sincerity*, though your Fraternity in *this* are so notoriously deficient, and in an Affair of the utmost Concern to us all. I will alledge nothing from any *Heathen* Writer to the Purpose in hand, but such as is allow'd to be *genuine* by *all*, or if not *by all*, I shall endeavour to prove it so, before I apply it; I will take the best Care, I can, not to mistake the Sense of my Author; and if I do at any Time, I know your Abilities to be such, that you can soon set me right. But this is a sort of Work, that can't be done, either to your Satisfaction, or mine, without having the *Authors* themselves before us, that I am to *appeal* to. Please then, if you have rested your self sufficiently, after the pleasant Walk we have had in the Park, to step into my Study, and there we'll summon those *Authors* to make their Appearance, and give *Evidence*, as often as we have Occasion for 'em.

B. I must confess, this Room gives me a singular Pleasure; and if you can make good your Point by the Help of these old *Gentile* Philosophers and Historians, (which I see are ready at hand whenever we call 'em,) I shall think they deserve a more honourable *Class*, than some of those old *primitive Gentlemen* I see at a Distance.

A. I

A. I easily guess who you mean, the *Fathers* of the Christian Church; your Prejudices, I find, are very strong against 'em; but I do assure you, without Foundation, unless human Frailties are to be charg'd as Crimes; otherwise I could easily vindicate 'em from those vile Reproaches and unjust Reflections, that are cast on 'em in your new *Free-thinking* Book: But I can only promise you now, that this shall be done some other Time, if you desire it; tho' it will appear in our present Debates, that *Heathen* Writers and the *Fathers* support one another in this Matter. Matters of *Fact*, we are now chiefly to enquire into, and the *Method* propos'd and approv'd of by you, is, that the *Heathen* and *Jewish* Writers *only* shou'd be appeal'd to, to see how far they confirm the several Branches of the *Christian* Religion, in that Manner as 'tis now profess'd by us in our *Bible*:

“ And if *they* shall fully and clearly bear witness, not only in general to some one Truth contain'd in the Holy Scriptures, but also to the *Divinity* of Jesus Christ; to the *Reality* of his Miracles; to the literal Accomplishment of the Divine *Prophecies* relating to Him; to the principal Doctrines contain'd in the New Testament; to the *Holiness* and *Purity* of Christianity, and the remarkable *Sanctity* of its Professors; I hope you will then agree with me, that the Religion, as we now profess it, is truly *primitive*, and did really come down from God.

B. I join issue with you entirely in the Manner as is already propos'd and agreed to: Begin, as soon as you please.

A. Before I begin, please to cast an Eye on a Manuscript lying on the Table; 'tis a Collection of the *Authorities* that I am to make use of from the *Heathen* and *Jewish* Writers, in order to prove what I have propos'd. This Collection has been made for some Years, pursuant to the Advice given by *Lactantius*, as I mention'd to you, just before we finish'd our Walk: The *Authorities* are already made *English*, with proper References; which will much shorten the Time. All I now desire, is, that you would let me know, in what Manner I shall proceed, or what Topick you would have first discuss'd; and when I produce my *Testimonies*, be as particular as you will, in putting Questions about the several *Authors*, whether as to their Time of living; or the Occasion and Nature of such *Testimonies*; or what Character such *Authors* bore in the World: Canvas these Matters as rigidly as you please; for I am satisfied, the more you do it, the brighter and stronger the *Testimony* will appear.

B. You may begin in what Manner you think fit, and take your own Way in the proving what you have undertaken: And as to putting of Questions, you need not have made that a Request; for I may happen to put 'em faster than you can answer em; at least, I do assure you, if that will make your *Testimonies* brighter and stronger

stronger, my Assistance shan't be wanting. I observe in the first Page of your *Collection*, there's a *Testimony* taken from *Phlegon*. If you please, let him be the *first* that gives his *Evidence*, and then we'll examine what *it* amounts to; I think he was an ancient Writer, and therefore may very well have the Preference given him.

A. *Phlegon* liv'd about the Beginning of the second Century, firnam'd *Trallianus*, from the Place of his Nativity in *Asia*; but he liv'd the best Part of his Time under the Emperor *Adrian*, who was fond of having him and other learned Men about his Person. *Phlegon* might not improperly be call'd one of your *Belles-Lettres* Men; those Pieces of his that are yet extant, make us justly regret the Loss of his other Works; we see however from his Remains, that he was one, who had a fine Taste; had a great Fund of good Learning, and yet a Politeness withal, that made him and his Learning agreeable to the greatest Court then known in the World.

B. What *Pieces* are there now remaining of *Phlegon's*, and from which of them do you intend to fetch your *Testimony*?

A. There are *three* very considerable ones yet extant, which *Meursius* has taken care to put together, and to illustrate with his own *Notes*. The most remarkable of those *three* Pieces, is his famous *History* of the *Olympiads* (from whence I intend presently to produce my *Testimonies*) dedicated to *Alcibiades* Captain of the Emperor *Adrian's* Guards. *Scaliger* in his *Animad-*

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versions on *Eusebius's Chron.* p. 185. suggests, that the Emperor *Adrian* himself compos'd this Work, and that *Pblegon*, by his Permission, publish'd it : Be that as it will, our Cause is not affected in the least. This Work was pen'd in the Way of *Annals*, or a sort of *Chronicle* that Way manag'd, divided into *sixteen* Books, giving an Account of the most remarkable Things that had happen'd in the whole World, for the Space of more than 900 Years; I mean, from the Establishment (or rather Renewal) of the *Olympiads* under *Iphitus*, to the 138th Year of *Jesus Christ*, which was in the 229th *Olympiad*. To apprehend the Excellency of this Work, you need only cast your Eyes on the 177th *Olympiad*, which *Photius* has preserv'd for us in his *Bibliothèque* ; and you will easily form a Judgment, from the extraordinary Occurrences *there* taken notice of by *Pblegon*, of what a mighty Advantage such an entire *Chronicle* would have been, for clearing up *many Passages* in *profane* and *Ecclesiastical* History too : However, according to the good Pleasure of the Almighty, there are still extant in *this* History of the *Olympiads*, two or three noble, irrefragable *Testimonies*, such as are not to be shaken by all the Wit and Malice of your *Fraternity* ; which *Pblegon* (neither wittingly nor willingly) gives to the *Divinity* of *Jesus Christ*, and to the Truth of the Christian Religion in general. The *Testimonies* are these —

B. Sir,

B. Sir, as impatient as I am to hear what those *Testimonies* are, I am willing to have one Minute's Patience more, whilst you just name to me the *Titles* of those *two* other Pieces of *Phlegon*: Pray oblige me so far, and in as few Words as you please.

A. One of them, which is the *second* Piece, is call'd, *A History of such Things as have been observ'd to be Extraordinary, Marvellous, or out of the common Course of Nature*. This History consisted of thirty-five Chapters; but the Beginning, and the better Part of it, is wanting. His *third* Piece is a Treatise on the *Longevity* of Men, giving a particular List of such Persons, as have exceeded one hundred Years. I will only add, that the Fragments of these *three* curious Pieces are happily to be met with in the *eighth* and *ninth* Volumes of *Gronovius's Greek Antiquities*; by which Means that learned Man has taken care, that Posterity shall not be depriv'd of those valuable Remains. I will now proceed, and observe to you the *Testimonies* that *Phlegon* gives in this History of the *Olympiads*; and for this Purpose we must also have Recourse to *Lactantius* in his *Institutions*, Lib. IV. c. 21. and to *Origen* in his second Book against *Celsus*: Now, *Phlegon* first of all avers in the most solemn Manner, "That *Jesus Christ* had been a true
" *Prophet*; that he knew the *Times* that were
" to come; that such were foretold by Him;
" and that there has been an exact Accomplish-
" ment of all his Predictions.

B. Pray, what might induce *Phlegon* to speak so positively in this Matter; or what *Authority* had he to support such a *Declaration*?

A. He had much the same *Authority*, as you would have, if you search'd the *Records* in the Tower of *London*, and got any Matter of *Fact* regularly attested from thence. You can't but know, and every reasonable Body must think, that they had at *Rome* (the great Metropolis) their *Archives*, publick *Registers*, or *Records*; you must allow, that *Phlegon* had free Access to these *Records*, when and as often as he pleas'd; and you find nothing more common amongst the primitive *Apologists*, when pleading before *Emperors* or others in Defence of the *Christian* Religion, than *appealing* to these publick *Acts*, or *Records*.

B. I suppose then, this Declaration of *Phlegon's*, touching the *Divinity* of Jesus Christ, was what he grounded upon some Matters of *Fact*, recorded in that publick Manner you speak of. But are there any such Matters of *Fact* in *Phlegon's* History of the *Olympiads*, as will sufficiently prove such Declaration of *Phlegon's* concerning Christ's *Divinity* to be well grounded?

A. There is one *Fact* in *Phlegon's* History, which does it effectually; and that is, his recording the wonderful *Darkness* that overspread the Face of the Earth at the Time of our Saviour's *Crucifixion*; this he had unquestionably confirm'd to him from those publick *Records* just mention'd; the *Post* he was in at Court, as

I have hinted already, must naturally lead him to search these *Records*, and the Nature of the *Work* which he was composing [his History] did indeed absolutely require it; in this Search then among the *publick Acts* occur'd to *Phlegon* among others, the extraordinary *Event* I have now taken notice of, and which he copy'd in the plain, simple Manner he found it recorded, These *Records* were indeed well enough known to Friends as well as Enemies of *Christianity*, or else there had not been such a frequent *Appealing* to 'em, as we find there was; and as to the particular *Fact* now before us, that renown'd Martyr *Lucian*, *Tertullian*, and others, have directly *appeal'd* to these *Roman Annals*, for the Truth of it, and as often confounded their Adversaries with that sort of Argument. The Martyr *Lucian*, so famous for his Learning, Piety, and Constancy, when his Judge had interrogated him publicly about his Religion, and he had given an Account of his Faith, he afterwards rais'd his Voice to a higher Pitch, and spake as follows, “ If you will not have any Regard to
 “ the *Testimony* I have given you for the *Divi-*
 “ *nity* of *Jesus Christ*, you have nothing left
 “ but to consult your own *Annals*; there you
 “ will find, that during *Pilate's* Government,
 “ and at the Time, when the Saviour of the
 “ World was crucify'd, the Sun disappear'd,
 “ and the Universe was buried, as it were, in
 “ *Darkness*.

B. I don't know how well at present to object to this *Testimony* of *Lucian's*, because you say he suffered *Death* for the Cause which he espoused. That's a *Time*, I must own, when *pious Frauds* can hardly be supposed to be practis'd; and putting a Cheat upon themselves or others, can turn to little Account: But before I fully assent to this *Testimony*, let me hear a little more of this *Lucian*, and who it is that relates this of him.

A. I easily imagin'd, you was not so well acquainted with this *Lucian*, as with another of the same Name, whose *Dialogues* (I know) now and then serve to exhilarate and keep up the Spirits of your Fraternity. Your *Lucian* had certainly a great deal of Wit; but he did not turn it to such good Purpose, as the *Martyr* did. And yet *unawares*, your *Lucian* too has given a *Testimony* to one of the greatest Mysteries of our Religion, as I shall have Occasion to shew and defend before we have done; so that his Wit proved a Snare to others, and has weakened the very Cause of *Infidelity* he was maintaining. As to our Martyr, if you dare believe the Character that St. *Chrysostome** and *Athanasius*† give of him, He was a Man of rare Accomplishments, and uncommon Learning; a profound Philosopher, and a compleat Orator; had a thorough Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and was so accurately skill'd in the *Greek* and *Hebrew* Learning, that he became a Corrector of the *Septuagint*; was the

* Tom. i. Hom. 46.

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the Author of that famous vulgar Translation of the Bible, that generally obtained in the *East*, both in the *fourth* and *fifth* Centuries, and was commonly call'd *Lucian's* Version. 'Tis natural to believe, such an able Defender of his Religion, would not be wanting in laying hold of the *Weapons*, that his Enemies had furnished him with for that Purpose; I mean their own *Records*: And that he did thus defend himself, as I have said already, you may learn from *Ruffinus*,* a Cotemporary of St. *Jerome*, and once a great Friend of his, at the latter End of the *fourth* Century: And, for your farther Satisfaction in this Matter, you shall have the *Testimony* of *Tertullian* likewise, when you please, who appeal'd to the *Roman Archives*, for the Truth of the same Matter of *Fact*, concerning the *miraculous Darkness* at the Time of our Saviour's Crucifixion.

B. I might except to *Tertullian's Evidence*, because, contrary to the Method proposed, he is neither *Jew* nor *Heathen*; but since 'tis so, that his *Evidence* relates only to a Matter of *Fact*, with which he press'd his Enemies; and they were certainly concern'd to answer him, if they could; and since you are proving, that *Heathens* likewise have taken Notice of the same Matter of *Fact*, and from the same *Records*, I think *Tertullian* ought to be heard in a proper Place: But I desire, before he makes his *Appearance*, that *Phlegon* may be called once more;
for

* Hist. Eccl. Lib. ix. Cap. 6.

for it was only said in *general* a while ago, if I remember right, that in *Phlegon's History* of the *Olympiads*, Mention was made of this *Fact*, the wonderful *Darkness*, attending our *Saviour's Crucifixion*; I desire now to know, how that *Passage* stands in *Phlegon*, and in what *Language* he wrote it?

A. I will give you the *Passage* at Length, which was written in *Greek*, and translated into *Latin* both by *Eusebius** and *St. Jerome*. The *Original* you may read at your *Leisure*;† I will now only give it you in *English*: The *Historian*, when he comes to the *two hundred and second Olympiad*, says expressly, *That in the fourth* (or last) *Year of that Olympiad*, (which answers to the *Eighteenth* of *Tiberius*, and to the *Year* of our *Lord's Crucifixion*,) *there was a greater Eclipse of the Sun than was ever known before*: *There was Night at the Sixth Hour** *of the Day*; *in as much as the Stars were seen in the Heavens*: *There was also a mighty Earthquake, which caused a great Overthrow at Nice in Bithynia*. The *Fathers* in their *Apologeticks* laid a great *Stress* (as well they might) upon these *Words* of *Phlegon*; and they have demonstrated in those and other of their *Works*, that this *Eclipse* of *Phlegon's*, (or to speak more properly,) that sudden *Defection*, or *Cessation* of *Light* at *Noon-Day*, neither was, nor could be, other than a *Supernatural*

* *Hieron. & Euseb. in Chronico.*

† *Phleg. Olymp. 202.*

* 'Tis well known, that at *Rome* the *Sixth Hour* was our *Twelve o'Clock*.

natural Eclipse, hap'ning at the Death of our Saviour, since by the unanimous Agreement of all *Astronomers*, whether *Greek* or *Roman*, or any where else through the Universe, there neither was, nor could be, a *natural* Eclipse, during that *Eighteenth* Year of *Tiberius's* Reign; and consequently *that Darkness*, we are now talking of, must necessarily have been *miraculous* or *supernatural*, it happening at the Time of *full Moon*, and was such an *Eclipse*, as put the whole System of the Universe quite out of Order. Give me Leave then to tell you, Sir, this is such a Sort of Proof for the Truth of our Religion, that whenever it has been urg'd, it has carried so much Strength and Weight along with it; has appeared so very powerful and cogent, that neither *Porphry*, nor *Julian*, nor any of our other Enemies have been able to make any *tolerable* Reply to it.

B. You seem to be very *elate* upon this first *Evidence* given by *Phlegon*; and if the Case stands really and truly, as you have put it, I think He well deserves the Precedency that's given him. But there are some *Scruples*, I must tell you, that still rest with me touching this *Testimony* of *Phlegon*: If he has finished his *Evidence*, my *Scruples* or *Exceptions* are ready to be offered to you.

A. It was you, if you remember, that call'd for *Phlegon* to make his *second* Appearance; and now he is here, I don't care yet to part with him: I find you are framing *Objections*, (though

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I believe nothing more than what I have often heard from your *Libertines*,) and therefore I'll make the most of *Pblegon* that I can: Now, this *Heathen* Writer in his *History* of the *Olympiads*, gives this farther *Testimony* in Behalf of the *Christian* Religion, and which equally deserves our Notice with the former, *viz.* "That the Predictions, which *St. Peter* had made to the *Jews*, touching their approaching Ruin, and that of their City *Jerusalem* in particular, had been all exactly fulfill'd in what had happen'd; and that such an *Event* ought to be look'd on as the Effect of some superior Power, and as the Will and Pleasure of Heaven, that Things should so fall out." And here 'tis proper to observe to you from *Origen*,* that he did not fail taking Advantage from this *Authority* of *Pblegon*, for refuting the Calumnies of *Celsus*, and for proving the *Divinity* of *Jesus Christ*, against the Profaneness of that *Epicurean*: And here also it may be farther remark'd, with your Leave, that at the Time when *Origen* writ, this *Chronicle* of *Pblegon* was all entire, and in every body's Hands. There's another *Fact* that was recorded by *Pblegon*, in his *Olympiads*, that serves very well our present Purpose, which *Eusebius* reports after *Pblegon*. I will just mention it, (for I am impatient to hear your *Scruples*,) and I may have an Occasion to speak of it more fully another Time: 'Tis *Pblegon* then, who has first observed, That *Pi-*

late,

* *Contra Celsum*. Lib. ii.

late, sinking under the Disgraces he met with, became his own Executioner; killing himself through Despair, after he had languished for some Time in his Exile, being banished by the Emperor Caligula. And now, I am ready to hear what those Scruples are, touching Phlegon's Testimony, as I have given it, concerning the miraculous Darkness at our Saviour's Death.

B. One Scruple that I have is this: There's an Author, who has been of good Credit many Years ago for some Works that he publish'd, and He is much valued by our Society, who says expressly, that this extraordinary Eclipse that Phlegon speaks of, is plac'd by him, not in the fourth Year of the two hundred and second Olympiad, as you have now given it from the Collection of Testimonies lying before us, but in the fourth Year of the two hundred and tenth Olympiad; and says farther, that in this Account of Phlegon's, the Sun is said to have been then in *Pisces*, one of the twelve celestial Signs. I don't remember to have seen this particular Tract of the Author's, otherwise than in *Manuscript*; but in that Manner 'tis common and very current amongst us: And, if what he says be true, your Argument is of no Force, and the Testimony of Phlegon only serves to prove, that there was an extraordinary Eclipse about thirty two Years after the Time that you have fixed for the Death of Christ.

A. Eusebius, who makes so much Use of Phlegon's Olympiads, when he comes to the fourth Year of the two hundred and tenth Olympiad, has

these remarkable Occurrences, viz. *This Year* Lucan the Poet, being catch'd in a Plot, held out his Arm for the Surgeon to cut his Veins: Nero set Rome on Fire, that he might have the better Idea of Troy when in Flames; and three Cities in Asia were overturned by an Earthquake, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse. But not a Word of such an extraordinary Eclipse as we are talking of: and I'll venture to say, before I name your Author, (which I can easily do, and am no Stranger to the Manuscript,) that he is the only Person that ever charged Phlegon in this Manner; and I have often wonder'd what Frenzy could carry a Man so far, as to attempt to change the Text of Phlegon, in order to rob Christians of so singular a Testimony given by a Heathen from the publick Records for the Divinity of Jesus Christ. I am sensible, however, I am now lying under the Suspicion of Insincerity, as to this Quotation from Phlegon; and therefore have no better Way to clear myself of such Imputation than by summoning Meursius* in his Notes upon Phlegon: Here he is; read, and then give me your Opinion.

B. I

* J. Meursius in notis ad Phlegontis Tralliani Fragmentum de Olympiis. Vid. J. Gronovii Thesaur. Antiq. Græc. Vol. ix. pag. 1292.

Eusebius in Chron. nominat xiii. librum Chronicorum Phlegontis; Γράφει δὲ καὶ λέγει ὁ τὰς Ὀλυμπιάδας γράφων Φλέγων, περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ τρισκαιδεκάτῳ, ῥήμασιν αὐτοῖς τὰδε. Τῷ δὲ ἔτει τῆς ΣΒ. Ὀλυμπιάδῃ ἐγένετο ἐκλειψις, τῷ τεταρτῷ ἔτει διακοσσοῦς δευτέρως Ὀλυμπιάδῃ ἐγένετο ἐκλειψις ἡλίῳ μεγίστη, τῶν ἐγνωρισμένων προλερον. καὶ νύξ ὥρα ἦν τῆς ἡμέρας ἐγένετο ὥς καὶ ἀστέρων ἐν ἑρατῇ τῷ φανῆναι. σεισμός τε μέγας κατὰ Βιθυνίαν γινόμενος τὰ πολλὰ Νιναιῖς κατέσβεψατο. Ubi habes, ecce, Fragmentum item Operis.

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B. I don't find one Word here of *Pisces*, or of the *two hundred and tenth Olympiad*: If there be no more *Phlegons*, my Author has certainly play'd the Knave: The Passage is as you have represented it to be, as to *Time*; and I own your Translation of the whole to be just, as you gave it me from your *Collection*: I fear my Author had some *ill Ends* to serve by this *changing* of *Phlegon's* Text.

A. Your Author is *Bodin*, the same Man that writ six Books *de Republicâ*, and other Pieces that

Ex Eusebio autem transtulit *Paulus Diaconus*, *Hist. Misc. Lib. vii.* Scribens autem inter cæteros & *Phlegon*, qui *Olympiadas* super ipsis enumerat, in tertio decimo sermone eisdem verbis adserit. Porro quarto anno CCII *Olympiadis*, facta est defectio Solis maxima, & nox horâ sextâ diei facta est: ita ut etiam stellæ in cælo apparerent. Terræmotus etiam magnus in *Bithynia* factus, plurimam *Nicææ* partem urbis subvertit. Et *Maximus* in *Scholiis* ad *Dionysii Areop. Ep. vii.* Μέννηται μὲν καὶ Φλέγων, ὁ Ἑλληνικὸς χρονογράφος, ἐν τρισκαιδεκάτῳ χρονογραφίῳ ἐν τῇ ΣΒ. Ὀλυμπιάδι, τῆς ἐκλείψεως ταύτης. Ante omnes verò *Origenes* contra *Celsum*, *Lib. ii.* qui de numero tamen libri ambigit. Φλέγων μὲν τοι ἐν τρισκαιδεκάτῳ, ἢ τεσσαρεσκαιδεκάτῳ, οἶμαι, τῶν χρονικῶν, καὶ τὴν περὶ τινῶν μελλόντων πρόγνωσιν ἔδωκε τῷ Χριστῷ. Et mox: Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἐπὶ Τιβερίῳ Καίσαρος ἐκλείψεως, ἢ Βασιλέυοντος καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ζοικεν ἐσαυρῶσθαι, καὶ περὶ τῶν μεγάλων τότε γενομένων σεισμῶν τῆς γῆς, ἀνέγραψε καὶ Φλέγων ἐν τῷ τρισκαιδεκάτῳ, οἶμαι, τῶν χρονικῶν. Ego rectum numerum censeo xiv. Nam, ut calculum subducamus, justâ operis dividendi proportionē, in singulis libris fuerint *Olympiades* quindecim; ac postremus imperfectus quatuor tantum in se habuerit, plures habiturus, si *Phlegonti* vita diuturnior fuisset: Ergo *Olympias* CCII. pertractata, *Lib. xiv.* fuerit.

Euseb. in *Chron. Lib. poster. ad Olymp. CCII.* ita habet: *Jesus Christus* secundum Prophetias, quæ de eo fuerant prolocutæ, ad passionem venit anno *Tiberii* decimo octavo, quo tempore etiam in aliis *Ethnicorum* *Commentariis*, hæc ad verbum scripta reperimus: *Solis facta defectio: Bithynia terræmotu concussa: & in urbe Nicæâ ades plurimæ corruerunt.* Quæ omnia his congruunt quæ in passione *Salvatoris* acciderant. Scribit verò super his & *Phlego*, qui *Olympiadarum* egregius Supputator est, in xiii. libro ita dicens; *Quarto autem anno CCII. Olympiadis, magna & excellens inter omnes, qua ante eam acciderant, Defectio Solis facta, &c.*

that are deservedly esteemed for a great deal of good Learning that is in them: But the *Manuscript*, out of which you and Thousands suck their Poison, (written *Dialogue wise* and in *Latin*,) is intitled, *De abditis rerum sublimium Arcanis*. 'Tis in these pestilent *Dialogues* that he has ventur'd in such a gross malicious Manner to impose upon the World in relation to this *Testimony* of *Phlegon*; and as to your *Fears* of *Bodin's* having some *ill Ends* to serve, it appears plain enough from those *Dialogues*, in other Instances besides this.

B. I own, *Bodin* was the Author I meant; but pray, what are those other Instances, that shew his *ill Designs*?

A. I say no more at present, than that in those *Dialogues*, he questions the *Virgin Mary* as *such*, after our Saviour's Incarnation, or God manifested in the Flesh; and treats the *two* first Chapters of *St. Luke's Gospel* as *Apocryphal*, because the *Divinity* of *Jesus Christ* there displays it self in so full a Light; upon the whole, 'tis too plain, that *Bodin*, under the Mask of a *Christian*, was either *Jew* or *Infidel* at the Bottom; and I hope in a little Time, God will give you Grace to leave such Company, and to use those Means that he has appointed to make you happy. I hope your *Scruple* however is now at an End; if not, *Reason* it self will do it for you: And you know by the *Laws* of your *Society*, as has been already observ'd, you are bound to use those *Faculties* that God has

given you after the best Manner you can. For consider the *Fact* or *Facts* now before us; *Phlegon* tells us from the *Roman Records* that there was such a *surprising Darkness*, and that it was attended with a *violent Earthquake*; and the *primitive Writers* in their *Apologies* for the *Truth* of the *Christian Religion*, appeal to those very *Records*, whether those *two Facts* were not there fully attested in the like Manner as they were related by the *Evangelists*: But would it not have been very absurd, impertinent, and doing no manner of Service to the Cause of Christianity, if, in those *Records* which they were appealing to, they had not known there was a perfect Agreement in *Point of Time*, as to such *Darkness* and *Earthquake*, and our *Saviour's Crucifixion*? And how easy had it been for those they *appeal'd* to, to have shewn 'em their *Error*, and which certainly they wou'd have done, if they cou'd? But the *publick Records* were too well known; the *Apologists* therefore triumph'd in this Particular, as well they might; nor was there ever a *Porphyry*, a *Lucian*, a *Celsus*, or a *Julian*, that offer'd to controvert the *Point of Time*, as to this *Eclipse*. *Astronomers*, as I said before, have all agreed that there could be no *Natural Eclipse* during the eighteenth Year of *Tiberius's* Reign, which was the Year of our *Saviour's Crucifixion*; and yet the *Roman Records* say there was an *Eclipse* that very Year; the *Apologists* very well knew the *Romans* had recorded such wonderful *Eclipse*, and therefore with great

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Confidence make their Appeal: *Phlegon* relates the same Thing from those *Records*; his *fourth* Year of the two hundred and second *Olympiad* is well known to correspond with the eighteenth of *Tiberius*; and the Passage given by *Phlegon* being the *same*, and taken from the *same* Place, where the *Apologists* appeal'd to, it must be, that the *fourth* Year of the two hundred and second *Olympiad* was the *Time* when this extraordinary Eclipse happen'd. But, Sir, were it possible that *Phlegon's* *Testimony* cou'd be any ways shaken (as I am sure it cannot) *non deficit alter*; he is not the *only* *Heathen* Writer, that can bear Witness to this wonderful *Darkness*, and being *wonderful*, serv'd to illustrate the Death of our Saviour: I have one in *petto*, whenever you please to call for him; and I can tell you farther, he is older than *Phlegon* too; for he liv'd even in the *first* Century: But my Business now is to hear your *Scruples*, if you have any *more* about *Phlegon's* *Testimony*, and then to give you the best Satisfaction I can.

B. You are very obliging: I have another *Scruple* or *Objection*, 'tis true, relating to *Phlegon's* *Testimony*; and I think a pretty strong one too; answer it, if you can; and till you have done that, I would not have you be so positive, as you are, that *Phlegon* will certainly *stand his ground*. The *Objection* is this; I observe, *Phlegon* in his *Testimony* does not take any Notice, that it was *full Moon* when this Eclipse happen'd, and therefore it might be a *natural* Eclipse, and yet many surprising Circumstances

stances attending it; but 'tis your Business, you know, to make it out to be *supernatural*, or else *Phlegon's Testimony* will not serve your present Purpose; Astronomers have acquainted the World with many amazing *Eclipses*; yet all in a *natural* Way. There was a prodigious *Eclipse* ushering in the Death of *Charles the Great*, as *Eginhardus* in his Life relates. There was another *Eclipse* twenty-eight Years after that, as taken notice of by *Alfredius* and others; so great, that the *Stars* were seen, as in the Night-time. And you know, 'tis not many Years ago, that we were Witnesses our selves of such an *Eclipse* here in *England*; so very dreadful, that the Birds fell down to the Ground; but these *Eclipses* all happen'd by a regular Motion of the heavenly Bodies; and *such* I am to suppose *Phlegon's Eclipse* to be, till you prove it otherwise.

A. I grant, Sir, if this *Eclipse* can't be prov'd to be *supernatural*, your Argument is just; but surely, the frequent *Appeals* made in that respect, pretty strongly imply it, were there no other Proof. It looks very odd, and reflects highly on the Understanding of the *Apologists*, (who, I hope, may be heard by-and-by in this Matter of *Fact*,) that they shou'd make such a Stir and Bustle in the World about an *Eclipse* of the Sun in a *natural* Way, however dreadful. I think, they might as well have told their Emperors, when they were pleading before them, that the *Peloponnesian War* was *just* or *unjust*, because the very Year it began, there was a terri-

ble *Eclipse* (tis well known,) inſomuch that the *Stars* were ſeen at Noon-day : But their *Apologeticks* ſufficiently ſhew 'em to be Men of excellent Senſe and great Learning ; and you can no more doubt of the Genuineſs of thoſe *Works*, than you can of the *Annals* of *Cornelius Tacitus*, or the *Commentaries* of *Julius Caſar*. 'Tis certain then, the *Eclipse* taken notice of by *Phlegon*, and appeal'd to by theſe *primitive* Writers, muſt be defended in the Manner you inſiſt it ſhould be, that is, in proving it to be *ſupernatural*. But ſtill, the Argument, in the main, does not turn upon *Phlegon's* omitting to ſpeak of the *Eclipse* being when it was *full Moon*. It has been obſerv'd already, that by the unanimous Conſent of all *Aſtronomers*, there cou'd not have been any *natural Eclipse*, during the eighteenth Year of *Tiberius* ; and if there had, your own Reason and frequent Obſervation tells you, that in a *natural Eclipse*, there cou'd not be *Darkneſs* for *three Hours* ; as there really was in the preſent Caſe. The *Evangelists* ſay in expreſs Terms, that our Saviour began his *Ministry* the fifteenth Year of *Tiberius* ; it appears likewise, that he continu'd in the *ſame*, for *three Years* ; that he kept *four Paſſovers* with his Diſciples, and about that Time ſuffer'd Death for us ; after which there was *Darkneſs* over all the Earth from the ſixth to the ninth Hour. As to *Phlegon's* not mentioning the *full Moon* therefore, it ought to be conſider'd, that he was writing as an *Annaliſt*, and not as an *Aſtronomer* ; or rather,

ther, in my Opinion, he *copy'd* purely and simply as he found this extraordinary *Event* enter'd in the *publick Records*, and did not trouble himself with *Astronomical* Calculations, or at least might not then have his *Tables* at hand. But, Sir, if what I have said in this Matter does not give you full Satisfaction, I must tell you once for all, that an *Eclipse*, if at the Time of the *Passover*, (which was the Time unquestionably when our Saviour suffer'd) must be when the *Moon was at full*; for so the Almighty in the *Jewish Law* commanded it. Here's at hand a curious and judicious Enquirer into the Nature of the *Jewish Laws*, * who speaks thus to the Matter in hand. "The divers keeping of the "*Passover* seemeth to have taken the Beginning "*from the divers keeping of the Month*; for "*when they reckon'd their Month from the Ap-* "*parition, which was doubtful and uncertain,* "*hence it came to pass, that the Beginning of* "*the Month was not always at the self-same* "*Period*; for the last Day of *Adar* might fall "*out so, that it should be the Beginning of* "*Nisan*; and therefore the *Sanhedrin* appointed, that the *Full Moon* should be the *thir-* "*teenth Day*, which according to the Verity "*was the fourteenth*; this Diversity arose of "*this, because of the divers Apparitions of the* "*Moon, so they kept the Preparation to the* "*Pascha diversly."* In the *fourteenth Day of*

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the

* *Weemse's Explanation of the Ceremonial Laws of Moses, &c.*
p. 90.

the first Month is the Lord's Passover, says the Text, (Levit. xxiii. 5.) you can no more dispute the Truth of the Jewish Laws, than you can of those made in the Greek and Roman Commonwealths; and 'tis as plain, that Christ comply'd, in keeping these Passovers at the same Time as the Jews did. Then drew nigh the Feast of unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover; and the Chief Priests and Scribes sought how they might kill him, (Luke xxii. 1.) And it came to pass, when Jesus had finish'd all these Sayings, he said unto his Disciples; Ye know, that after two Days is the Feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man is to be deliver'd to be crucify'd, (Mat. xxvi. 1.) I hope, you don't require more to be said for establishing this Point, that our Saviour suffer'd when it was Full Moon; and this may amply supply the Deficiency in Phlegon's Testimony, which you object to; tho' I think what has been said for him just now, was a sufficient Excuse in that Respect: However the Testimony of Phlegon, as the Case now stands, is entire, and of full Force again,

B. You say, that Christ kept the Passover at the same Time the Jews did, and therefore it must be Full Moon when he suffer'd: But does it appear from the Texts you have quoted, or any otherways, that the Jews and Christ did eat the Passover upon the same Day?

A. I grant, 'tis a Question, that may, and has been put before now; but, I think, it will do you little Service at this Time, which way soever it be resolv'd: However, I'll give you the Resolu-

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tion of the same learned Person* I quoted just now, upon it, and if you think fit to reply, I am ready to hear you. "Christ, says he, observ'd the *true Day*; in the End of the *fourteenth Day*, and the Beginning of the *fifteenth*, he eat it betwixt *two Evenings*: But the Jews transferred the Day; and eat it in the End of the *fifteenth Day*, and Beginning of the *sixteenth*; and therefore when Christ eat the *Passover*, it was the Day of the *Preparation* to the *Jewish Passover*, altho' indeed it was the *true Passover*." And is not this Resolution agreeable to the *Jewish Law*, and the *Fact* it self in regard to the *Time* of our *Saviour's Suffering*? Does not the *Jewish Law* say, *In the first Month, the fourteenth Day of that Month, between the two Evenings is the Lord's Passover*, (Lev. xxiii. 5.) alluding to the Charge given by God to the People of *Israel*, when he was leading them out of the Land of *Egypt*, that they shou'd have their Lamb in Readiness against the fourteenth Day of the first Month, when they were to kill it *between the two Evenings*, Exod. xii. 6.

B. I don't see much Room left for making any *Reply*; and am now convinc'd it wou'd turn to little Account, if I did; if you please, we'll dismiss *Phlegon*; we have had him a long While before us, and I think you have made the *most* of him; much more, I must own, than I at first imagin'd. I think, you said some Time ago, that you had another *Heathen Writer* in *petto*, that liv'd

* *Weemse*, Ib, p. 89.

liv'd even in the *first* Century, and was able to give *Evidence* as to this *Darkness* at Christ's *Crucifixion*: I am ready to hear him, when you will; and pray what is his Name?

A. He is often spoken of by the *Fathers* under the Name of *Thallus*; and they generally join his *Testimony* with that of *Phlegon's*, the one to support the other. 'Tis so done by *Minutius Felix* in his *Octavius*; by *Tertullian* in his *Apologetique*; by *Justin* in his *Exhortation to the Gentiles*; by *Lactantius*, and some others. *Thallus* was a *Grecian*, living, as I said before, in the *first* Century, and writ, it seems, the *Syriac Histories* with great *Exactness*, in *Conjunction* with one *Castor*, who, *Vossius* believes, and with a good deal of *Reason*, was the Son of that *Castor* whom *Cicero* has made famous by his *Invectives* against him. Now, this *Thallus* in his *third Book* of the *Syriac Histories*, takes Notice "in a particular Manner of this *miraculous Darkness* at " *Noon-day*, and of its so hap'ning in the *eighth* " *teenth Year* of *Tiberius's* Reign.

B. I find, this *Thallus* comes handed down to us by the *Fathers*, whilst they were pleading their own Cause; I have often told you, I don't like it; let the *Testimony* come directly from some *Heathen Writer*, and I shall be much better satisfied.

A. Please to consider a little, Sir: The *Testimony* of *Thallus*, or any other *Heathen Writer*, that comes to us in this *Manner*, comes with greater *Force*, and carries greater *Authority* with it,

than by any other sort of Conveyance. For, in the Case of an *Appeal* from *Christians* to *Heathens*, if the *Heathen* Author that is quoted; if his *Works*; and if moreover any particular *Passage* in such *Works*, are all allow'd of, and not the least Objection made; this certainly must be *recognizing* such Author, such his *Works*, and such particular *Passage* in his *Works*, in the strongest Manner possible. You do not question, nor indeed can you, whether such *Apologies* were really made for the Christian Religion; and you may as well question *Cicero*, (whom I just now nam'd) when he tells us, * there was such a Man as *Protagoras*, and that he vended such and such impious Discourses, as dispute here about *Thallus* and the *Passage* already mention'd to be in his *Works*.

B. 'Tis true; I have already in some measure allow'd of such sort of Proof from the *Fathers*, as being *reasonable*; and therefore shall press it no farther: But have you any ancient Writer, and of good Credit, who writes professedly as an *Historian* or *Chronologer*, and not as an *Apolo- gist*, and who takes any Notice of this *miraculous Darknes* at such Time? If so, I desire to hear him.

A. I think, I am able to oblige you with such an Author too, that will answer in every Respect what you desire: 'Tis the celebrated *Julius Africanus*, who flourish'd not above three or fourscore Years after *Pblegon*, and was once sent
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* De Nat. Deorum. L. 1.

by his Countrymen of *Nicopolis*, as Ambassador to the Emperor *Antoninus Heliogabalus*, to obtain some Priviledges ; in which Embassy he was successful : This noble *African* compil'd an excellent Work, much valued by all the Learned, written in a *Chronological* Way ; and containing, in *five* Books, a compendious but accurate History of all remarkable Occurrences in the World, from the Creation to the Reign of *Heliogabalus*. *Julius Africanus* was a *Christian*, and may be reckon'd the first and most ancient Historian that the Christians had : Now, this Man in his *Chronology* remarks in the same Manner, as *Phlegon* and *Thallus* had done, (the one in his *Olympiads*, the other in his *third* Book of the *Syriac History*,) that there was an *Universal Darknes*, putting the World under the greatest *Consternation* at the very Time when our Saviour suffered.

B. I find by this Testimony of *Julius Africanus*, that the *Darknes* was *universal* ; and I observe in general from the *Testimonies* you have alledged to corroborate (as you think) the *Scripture* Account of this *Darknes*, that you would have it thought to be *universal*, or over *all the Earth* ; whereas by the *Scripture* Account, the *Darknes* seems to have extended itself no farther than the Land of *Palestine* : *Beza* * accordingly renders it, *super universam regionem* ; and I can't but be of the same Opinion with that learned Commentator, viz. That the Miracle still appears greater, if at the Time of the *Passover*, when it was *Full Moon*,
and

* Mat. xxvii. 45. Mark xv. 33.

and when at Midday, the Sun should suddenly withdraw its Light from that little Corner of the Earth *only*, where this great Scene of Christ's Suffering was acted, and yet the *whole* World besides should enjoy its Light at the same Time.

A. 'Tis true, Sir, there is Room for such a Conjecture; but you must own, it can do your Cause no Service, were it to be supported, as I am satisfy'd it cannot: Indeed our *own Version* in Part, seems to favour this Conjecture; for we render the *Original*, in St. Matthew,* *over all the Land*; in St. Mark, *over the whole Land*: But in St. Luke 'tis render'd, *over all the EARTH*,† which best answers the Import and general Acceptation of the Greek Word. The *Septuagint* uses the very same *Word*, when the *Earth*, in general must be understood, and not any one Part of it: *The Earth was without Form, and void*:‡ As to *Beza's Version*, 'tis to be observed, that the *Syriac*, as 'tis render'd by *Tremellius*, (and which best agrees with the *Original Greek*,) runs throughout the three Evangelists, *over all the Earth*, or *over the whole Earth*:|| And had *Beza* and our Translators been living, when the *Syriac Translation* was made, I'm satisfy'd there would have been no such Caution us'd by 'em, in rendering this Passage. But you say with *Beza*, that the *Miracle* appears greater, in not suppo-

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* Mat. xxvii. 45. ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν.

† Luke xxiii. 44. ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν.

‡ Gen. i. 2.

|| Super universam Terram. — Super totam Terram.

sing the Darkness to be *universal*, but rather confining it to that Place or Country, where the Scene of Wickedness was more particularly acted in *crucifying the Lord of Glory*. I will freely speak my own Sense of this Matter, whatever Weight it may have with you. Our Saviour's Crucifixion, it must be allow'd, had a Relation to the Sins of the *whole* World, and not of *those* only who liv'd in the Land of *Palestine*: This *miraculous Darkness*, therefore, was properly the *Sanction*, or the Method taken by infinite Wisdom, to manifest his Wrath and vindictive Justice, in the Death of our Redeemer: And if so, then such *Sanction* of divine *Wrath* may be reasonably supposed to be made known at that Time to *all Mankind*. In Adam we all died; and when the Time was come, that in *Christ* we should all be made alive, I must think, that this *miraculous Darkness*, out of which *Light* was to arise to the *Gentiles*, was notify'd by our heavenly Father to *all* his Creatures, I mean to the fallen Race of Mankind in general, as well as to the People of the *Jews*.

B. I do not make any Objection to this sort of Reasoning of yours; but are there any publick Records to support the Truth of the *Fact*; I mean, the Darkness being *universal*. I own, you have proved this *Darkness* to be *miraculous*, whether we suppose it to have been *universal*, or *particular*: 'Tis therefore for my own private Information, that I now ask you, whether this Matter can any Ways be cleared up; or whether there be any *Authentic Testimonies* extant at this Time of Day upon the

the Face of the whole Earth, to evince such *Darkness* to have been *universal*?

A. You are pleas'd to allow of my *Reasoning* upon this Point; but your Question now, let me tell you, is *unreasonable*: However, if you'll venture to believe that great and learned Prelate Monsieur *Huet*,* Bishop of *Avranche* in *France*, lately deceased; and if in Conjunction with him, you will give Credit to the History of *China*, written by *Hadr. Gresson*; and to three other Writers, *Couplet*, *Intorceta*, and *Rougemont*, who say the same Thing in their Account of *Confucius*; I say, according to these Authors, there are at this Day surprizing *Monuments* extant, for the Honour of the Christian Religion, in the Empire of *China*, to support this *Fact* of an *universal Darkness* at our Saviour's Crucifixion: The *Chinese*, all the World well knows, have been long distinguish'd for their Skill in *Astronomy*, as well as for their Exactness in recording and fixing their *Epocha*, or proper Period in all great Events: Now, according to this Authority here given you, the *Chinese* have been particularly careful by remarking in their *Calendars*, or *Annals*, " That under the Reign of their sage Prince
" *QUAM-VU-TI*, there was a *total Eclipse* of the
" Sun in the Month of *April*; with which the
" King was exceedingly surpriz'd; for (say those
" *Annals*) it happen'd contrary to the regular
" Course of Nature, [*i. e.* when it was *Full Moon*,]
" putting their Astronomers into the utmost Con-
" fusion;

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* In his *Demonstratio Evangelica*.

" fusion ; and their *Epocha*, or Year assign'd,
 " when this *extraordinary* Eclipse happen'd, an-
 " swers (our Authors say) precisely to the
 " *fourth* Year of the *two hundred and second* Olym-
 " *piad*, which was the *eighteenth* Year of the
 " Reign of *Tiberius Cæsar*." Now admit or re-
 ject this Relation, as you please ; I will not
 knowingly insist upon any *Authority*, where it
 can with any Colour be disputed ; though I can-
 not see any Exception to be made to this Rela-
 tion, unless it be that the Relators were *Roman*
Catholicks ; which, in my Opinion, ought to be
 of no Force or Weight at all in this Case: For
 though they (confessedly) may have such Ends
 in View, as, by introducing the *Christian* Re-
 ligion amongst the *Chinese*, to introduce and in-
 culcate such *Doctrines* withal, which we think are
 not to be found in, or justify'd by that *Gospel*
 which they publish ; yet their *Appealing* to the
Chinese Annals, in respect of this *wonderful Dark-*
ness, and shewing the exact Conformity of such
Annals, in Point of *Time*, with what is said in
 the Gospel, may still be admitted as a good Proof
 of our Saviour's *Divinity*, and of the Truth of
 his Doctrine in general: And *that*, you must grant,
 is sufficient for my present Purpose.

B. I do grant it; nor am I for using such Me-
 thods to invalidate your Evidence for this
particular Fact ; for, upon such *Facts*, the *Ro-*
manists cannot ground any of those *Errors*, which
 we condemn as *such*, though they may find other
 means to introduce 'em amongst the *Chinese*. I
 grant,

grant, the *particular Fact* in question now is only, Whether there was such a Person as *Jesus Christ*, whose Divinity was *recogniz'd* by this *miraculous Darknefs* at his Death; and whether such an *extraordinary Eclipse* of the Sun was not taken notice of at the *same Time* by the *Chinese*, inhabiting the extreme Parts of the Earth, and was so recorded by them? In such a Case, I agree, the *Credibility* of the Authors you cite ought to be consider'd in another Manner, than in barely saying they are *Roman Catholicks*: And since the Subject is of that Importance, and, as you say, so much for the Honour of the Christian Religion, if this *Fact* can be fully made out from the *Chinese Annals*; I think, instead of rejecting or condemning the *Evidence* given by such Authors, their Evidence may still stand good, till (as there ought to be) a stricter Enquiry shall be made into it; and in this Manner, if you please, we'll drop it at present.

A. Agreed; I think 'tis now high Time to claim the Promise you made me some Time ago, that *Tertullian* should be heard in a proper Place, touching this *miraculous Darknefs* at our Saviour's Passion. He *appeals* then to the same *Roman Records*, or *Archives*, that *Phlegon* and others had recourse to, in that famous *Apology*, which he made with so much Argument and Eloquence in behalf of the Christians, during the Reign of *Severus*. He speaks of this *Eclipse*, as one of the greatest, the most authentick, and most extraordinary Events, that had ever happen'd

pen'd in the Universe : He sets it forth boldly and openly, as a *Prodigy* that was well known over all the Earth : He represents it as a *Fact* publick, prov'd, and avow'd ; and to which their own *Annals* had all along bore Witness. Now, can it be imagin'd, that *Tertullian* could ever have been induc'd to speak of this *miraculous* Eclipse in such a Manner ; with such a confident *Air* ; and to ground all he said upon the very *Records* they were in Possession of, before whom he was pleading, if he had not been very sure of his Point ? when nothing more was to have been done to give him the Lye, and entirely ruin all *Christians* and their Cause at once, than to have produced those very *Annals*, or *Records* he was appealing to ? About *fifty* Years after *Tertullian*, *Origen* entered the Lists with *Celsus* the *Epicurean*, in publishing (towards the latter End of his Days) that admirable Work, which we still have preserved, and is generally esteemed, as the most compleat Performance amongst all his Works extant. He there proves irrefragably the *Divinity* of our Saviour from this wonderful *Darkness*, as also from the *Earthquake* that was felt at his Death under the Reign of *Tiberius*. He makes *Phlegon* also his Voucher for these Things ; for he well knew, he was such an Author they could make no Objection to, he being of the same Religion with themselves ; and besides, *Phlegon's* Chronicle was at that Time read by all the World. I hope, Sir, by this Time I have left you no Room for question-

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ing the Truth of that *Fact*, which has been the Subject of our present Conference; I mean the *miraculous Eclipse* and *Earthquake* that happen'd at our Saviour's Crucifixion: You see how well, how fully the *Testimonies* of *Heathen Writers* bear Witness to *those* of the primitive *Fathers*; and how *both* of them confirm the Account given of this *Darkness* in the Holy Scriptures. The *Evidence* therefore given by *Heathen Writers* has sufficiently prov'd the grand Point of all, *viz.* the *Divinity* of our blessed Saviour; and that there was just Reason for the *Exclamation* made by the *Areopagite*, upon this *miraculous Eclipse*, which he himself was witness to, *viz.* *Either the Divine Nature suffers, or else now sympathizes with him that does so.*

B. If you please to remember, before we left the *Park*, and came into your Study here, I frankly own'd to you, that I was sincerely dispos'd to hear all you cou'd offer in Defence of the *Christian Revelation*; and I must now farther own to you, that the *Evidence* which you have produc'd from *Heathen Writers*, as to this particular *Fact* of the *Eclipse* and *Earthquake*, in Defence of it, has given me no small Satisfaction; and as often as I read the History of our Saviour's *Passion* for the future, the concurrent *Testimonies* you have brought, will have their true Weight, and must create an inward Pleasure withal. But before I take my Leave of you, I wou'd willingly know the Reason, why you just now touch'd so lightly upon the *Testimony* of the *Areopagite*,
which

which is a *Testimony* so well known, and which I expected you wou'd have produc'd, when you first set out upon this Sort of Proof.

A. I desire it may not be forgot, what I told you at the Beginning of this *Conference*, that I wou'd deal with you in this Affair (as being an Affair of the last Consequence) with the utmost *Sincerity*; though (as I beg Leave to remind you once more) your *Fraternity* in this Respect are notoriously deficient themselves, and therefore ought to be suspected. Now, the Reason of my not insisting on this *Testimony* of *Dionysius* the *Areopagite*, is, because some Criticks do not appear fully satisfied, as to the *Authority* on which the Writers of the Life of *Dionysius* ground this *Exclamation* of his; Dr. *Cave* makes a *Scruple*, when he says, *If Credit may be given to the Writers of his Life*; * and yet that great Man assigns no Reason for such *Scruple* neither. There are many learned Men, who do not in the least question the Truth of this *Fact*; I mean of *Dionysius's* being at *Heliopolis* in *Egypt*, when our Saviour suffer'd, and when the surprizing *Darkness* extorted such *Exclamation*; and they assign several Reasons to support the *Fact*; as being deliver'd down in a traditionary Way, for above eleven Centuries; and as having the Judgment also of some eminent Writers, such as *Cyrill*, *Ephrem*, *Maximus*, *Sophronius*, and *Juvenal* Patriarch of *Jerusalem*, in favour of this *Fact*.

However,

* Si vitæ ejus Scriptoribus fides sit adhibenda. *Cave*, Hist. Liter.

However, it being a *Fact* that has not been universally admitted, I chuse rather to leave it with you, under the Disadvantage of such a *Scruple*, than to join or place it with other *Facts* that are *incontestable*. As to those remarkable *Testimonies* that have taken up the greatest Part of our Time, and were produc'd from the *Records* of the *Roman Empire*; the *Syriac Histories* of *Tbal-lus*; and the *Olympiads*, or *Pblegon's Chronicle*; I make it my Request now, at parting, that you will in particular reflect on them at your *Leisure*; and I am glad to hear you say, that the *Evidence* I have already produc'd in *this Manner*, has given you no small Satisfaction. I can assure you, I am as much pleas'd to see, that you dare be *honest* in your Enquiries after eternal Happiness, which is an Attempt your *Fraternity* are loth to make, though the strongest Principle (which is *Self-Interest*) shou'd lead 'em to the doing of it. When you next please to favour me with your Company in this Place, you shall have farther Proof given you from other *Facts*; and in the same *Manner* as we have now proceeded; I mean, in sticking close to such *Evidence* as *Heathen* or *Jewish* Writers may afford us for the Truth of the *Christian Religion*; give me Leave only to remind you of the *Rule* that your *Fraternity* has laid down in their *New Book*, (though they by no Means observe it themselves,) *viz.* that in these Inquiries, *You still continue to use those Faculties which God has given you to judge with, after the best Manner you can.*

Let this *Sincerity* appear in our next Conference, and I make no Question but you will be still farther convinc'd, that the *Gospel Revelation* is from God; and consequently with Mr. Lock, (as I quoted him before) you will likewise rejoice in the *Light of Revelation*, which sets us at Rest in many Things; the Manner whereof our poor Reason (says he) can by no Means make out to us.

B. Adieu! my good Friend. My Soul is full of Thought upon this important Subject; which I believe will soon occasion you the Trouble of a second Visit.

~~And I am glad to hear you are already produc'd in this Man-
ner, has given you no small Satisfaction. I can
assure you, I am as much pleas'd to see that you
date be pleas'd in your Enquiries after eternal
Happiness, which is an Attempt your Brother-
may be loth to make, though the strongest Prin-
ciple (which is Self Interest) should lead out to
the doing of it. When you next please to fa-
vor me with your Company in this Place, you
shall have rather Pleas'd given you from other
Laws; and in the same Manner as we have now
proceeded; I mean in sticking close to such
Evidence as Heaven or Jewish Writers may af-
ford us for the Truth of the Christian Religion;
give me Leave only to remind you of the Rule
which I have laid down in their New
Look (though they by no Means observe it them-
selves) viz. that in these Enquiries, you will con-
tinue to use those Faculties which God has given
you to judge with, after the best Manner you can.~~

CON-

CONFERENCE II.

A. **G**OOD Morrow, Sir. This early Visit makes me hope for more of your Company than I had the last Time.

B. — Sir, I am come to give you more Trouble. This *Room* gives me a fresh Pleasure; and I can venture to tell you, that I begin to have a better Opinion of those old *Fathers* there, than I had when I was here before.

A. I presume the Reason of that is, because you found their *Testimonies* (alledg'd in our last Conference) sufficiently supported by the *Evidence* that I produc'd from *Heathen* Writers; or rather that they supported one another.

B. 'Tis true; and I want to hear more of such *Evidence* touching some other *Points*, wherein the Truth of the Christian Religion, I shou'd think, is very nearly concern'd. I shou'd be glad, if *Heathen* or *Jewish* Writers can enable you to clear up some such *Points* to my Satisfaction.

A. You know, I am under the strongest Obligations already, to give you all the Satisfaction possible in *that Way*. Please then to let me know what the *Point* is, that you wou'd have first discuss'd; and then, upon examining the Collection of *Testimonies* here lying before us,

it will soon appear what *Evidence* you may expect from *Heathen* or *Jewish* Writers.

B. The Point is this: After I had read over carefully the History of our Saviour's *Passion*, (which I assure you, I did before I clos'd my Eyes that Evening, when I parted with you in this Place,) and had spent some Time in reflecting upon the *miraculous* Eclipse attending it, and the undoubted *Evidence* you had brought from *Heathen* Writers to confirm that Part of the History; I found, by looking back, that Christ had *prophefied* in a very remarkable Manner, but *two* or *three* Days before he suffer'd, concerning the *Destruction* of *Jerusalem*, the *Temple*, and the whole *Nation* in general. Now, this is a Part of Scripture that becomes you to clear up, and to set in the fullest Light possible, if you are able to do it. For I must own, I take it to be a *Prophecy*, that may be stil'd a *Fundamental* one; a *Prophecy* that seems to be the best *circumstantiated* of any other: The *Facts* are pointed out in a most distinguishing Manner, not only by the *three* Evangelists, but by several *Prophets* long before; I desire therefore, this *Prophecy* may be the present Subject; and let me hear what *Heathen* or *Jewish Evidence* you have relating to its Accomplishment; or such as may prove and explain this remarkable Piece of sacred *History*.

A. Sir, I have *Roman* and *Jewish Evidence*; both of them ready at hand, to give you full Satisfaction in what you desire: But before I

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Summon those Writers, I can't but observe, that when our Saviour's *Predictions* in this Affair of *Jerusalem* and the *Jewish* Nation, are well weigh'd, with the several Circumstances taken notice of by him, they look rather like an *Historical* Abridgment of what is past, than a *Prophecy* of what was to happen near *forty* Years after; and the whole (take it altogether) must be an undoubted Argument of the Truth of the Christian Religion, and its Doctrines.

B. Upon second Thoughts, before you produce your *Evidence* or *Authority*, for confirming this *Prophecy*, please to give a summary Account of it, as it stands recorded by the *three* Evangelists; since you say it looks so like a History, rather than a Prophecy.

A. It appears from them, * that our Saviour at the latter End of his Ministry was frequently inculcating this grand Affair on the Minds of the *Jews*; letting 'em know that their *Desolation* and final *Overtbrow* was near at hand; that so when it should come to pass, they might remember it was the just Punishment of Heaven for their *Infidelity*. He declares to them, in the plainest Terms, a dreadful *War*; points out the last *Siege*, wherein their City *Jerusalem* shou'd be entirely subverted; the horrible *Famine* they were to suffer; the false Prophets that should deceive; their Dispersion over the Face of the whole

* Matt. xxiv. Mark xiii. Luke xxi.

whole Earth; the *Abomination of Desolation* in the *Holy Place*, that is, the Profanation of the *Temple*, as well by placing *there* the Images of the *Roman Emperors*, as by the numberless Murders that shou'd be there committed; the frightful *Circumvallation* or casting up of the Trenches round about 'em, that none might escape the divine Vengeance: He explains to them how, by a long Course of Wickedness, the Wrath of Heaven was drawn down; gives 'em certain Signs, whereby they might know the exact Time, when God would inflict these severe Punishments upon them; and it was but *three Days* before his Passion, as you observ'd, when our Saviour (for the last Time) going out of the *Temple*, took an Occasion of prophesying in so remarkable a Manner concerning the Destruction of it. * One of his Disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of Stones, and what Buildings are here; and Jesus answering, said unto him, Seest thou these great Buildings? there shall not be left one Stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

B. If I might be excus'd for interrupting you a few Minutes, I should be glad to know, what might induce this Disciple, or any other, to admire so much *this Structure*, when I think 'tis agreed on all Hands, that the *first Temple* was vastly superior to the *second* in every respect?

A. Your

* Mark xiii.

A. Your Observation is just in the main: But in one *Respect* the *second* Temple was unquestionably more glorious than the *first*, being that wherein the Redeemer of *Mankind* appear'd; agreeable with what *Haggai* * had long before prophesy'd; *The Desire of all Nations shall come, and I will fill this House with Glory, saith the Lord of Hosts; the Glory of this later House shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts; and in this Place will I give Peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.* With this Restriction, I say, your Observation's just: For otherwise the *second* Temple, which *Zerubbabel* rebuilt, did by no Means equal the Splendor and Grandure of the *first*: *Solomon*, in one Article only, had allotted a hundred thousand Talents of Gold, and ten hundred thousand Talents of Silver, which his Father *David* had left him for that Purpose, with other immense Dispositions of the like Nature: And yet this *second* Temple, tho' in these Respects inferior to the *first*, was look'd on by the *Gentiles*, as one of the *Wonders* of the World. And indeed there was Reason why they and others shou'd esteem it as such; when tis consider'd what vast Additions were made to this *second* Temple by King *Herod*, firnam'd the *Great*; the Number of *Portico's*, *Piazza's*, and other Buildings, besides the magnificent Decorations with which he had enrich'd it *with*; and these *Imbellishments* might probably be the Occasion of an Error, that some have run into

* Chap. ii. 7, 9.

into in this Matter, as thinking that *Herod* had been the Founder of a *third* Temple; tho' the Prophet *Haggai* assures us of the contrary; and the same has been substantially prov'd and confirm'd by others. * There was Room enough then, you see, for the Disciples, or any other curious Observer, to wonder at the Structure of this *second* Temple, when taken altogether. By the Descriptions that are given us, the Stones were very remarkable for their *Whiteness*, as well as *Firmness*, but chiefly so, for their prodigious *Size*; of which we can hardly form an Idea. For according to *Josephus*, † every one of those Stones was five and twenty Cubits long, twelve Cubits broad, and eight Cubits high; and all these vast Stones were so link'd together, and conjoin'd with Lead and Iron, that this Temple seem'd likely enough to last as long as the World it self.

B. This Digression has much oblig'd me. Please to proceed in finishing the *Scripture* Account of this *Prophecy*; and then I am ready to hear your other Account of it from *Heathen* and *Jewish* Writers.

A. I have little more to observe, than that our Saviour inform'd his *Disciples* as well as the *Jews*, that the *Time* of this Destruction of the Temple, when there shou'd not be left one Stone upon another, and when all these *Evils* shou'd befall their Nation, was very near at hand; so near

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* Vide *Saliani Annales* ad A. M. 4035.

† *Antiq. Jud.*

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that the present Race, the Families then in Being, shou'd see and feel it all. *This Generation shall not pass away, till all these Things be fulfilled.* So remarkable a *Prediction* made a very strong Impression on the Minds of the first Christians. *Thirty-two* Years after our Saviour had *prophecy'd* in this Manner, when *Cestius*, Governor of *Syria* came with a great Force before *Jerusalem*, (which was about *six* Years before the last and famous *Siege* under *Titus*) the *Christians* soon call'd to Mind what our Saviour had said, as also the express Command he had given them, that they shou'd quit the *Plain of Judea*, and retire to the *Hill-Country*: *Then let them which be in Judea flee unto the Mountains.** Accordingly they retir'd to *Pella* in good Time, which is a City in the mountainous Country, upon the Confines of *Judea* and *Arabia*; and though there were many Thousands of Christians, 'tis well known, in *Jerusalem* and the adjacent Parts before the *Siege* began, yet there was not *one* to be found, when the City came to be taken.

B. I must now remind you of what you said some Time ago, that you had both *Roman* and *Jewish* Evidence ready, to make good the *literal* Accomplishment of this *Prophecy*: It seems to be a proper Time now to produce it, which shall be carefully attended to.

I

A. It

* Mat. xxiv. 16.

A. It has pleas'd infinite Wisdom, that this *grand Event* shou'd be transmitted to Posterity by the united Testimonies of *Jew* and *Gentile*; and particularly so, by two of the most eminent Historians that the *Jews* and *Romans* cou'd boast of; I mean *Josephus* and *Tacitus*: The former had a considerable Command in the *fatal War* himself; the latter was a *Pretor*, as well as *Consul*, and might have been an Eye Witness of all the *Facts* in question, that are related in his History. I would farther observe, that the same overruling Providence so order'd it, that about two Centuries afterwards, the Emperor *Tacitus* was very sollicitous in preserving this important History; several *Copies* being placed by his Appointment, in the most eminent Libraries; and this done yearly at the publick Expence.

B. I think *Tacitus* the Historian, was a professed Enemy to the Christian Religion, and Contemporary with *Pliny*, that gives *Trajan* an Account of the *Christians* Conduct, in one of his Epistles.

A. You are right, Sir; and, let me add, that there was an entire Friendship* between *Tacitus* and *Pliny*; and yet in regard to the *Christians*, their Thoughts and Dispositions were widely different. The latter appears, by his own Letters, to be of a sweet, affable Temper, humane and equitable; and when he gives a Character of the *Christians*, 'tis plain, he does it in the most favourable and genteel Manner; whereas the former,

* Plin. Lib. vii. Ep. 20.

mer, we may observe from his Works, was naturally of a malign and spiteful Temper, more inclin'd to give a wrong, than a kind Turn in his Way of Thinking; and as to *Christians* and our Religion, he formed the most hideous Ideas possible, and has painted them both in the most frightful Colours. You see this in his *Annals*, * where he is remarking, with a great deal of satirical Wit, upon the Luxury, Debauchery, and Cruelty of *Nero*; that Emperor regaled himself for six Days together at the Sight of his own City, which he had set on Fire; and finding it necessary to put a Stop, and to appease the People, who were justly incensed at him, as the Author of that general Calamity, bethought himself of this Expedient, in charging the *Christians* with all that had been done; upon which the Historian gives the following Character of the *Christians* and their Religion, though, as vile and false as the Emperor's Charge itself was; he speaks of them, as a People *odious to Mankind*, and calls their Religion a *dangerous Superstition*. I think much the same Way of talking is in your *new Book*, call'd, *Christianity as old as the Creation*, &c.

B. Let that Reflection pass at present, if you please: I desire to know, if you can give any Account how *Tacitus*, and other Heathens came to entertain such odd Notions of the *Christian Religion*, and whence such an Inveterency against its Professors?

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A. The

A. The Account, as I take it, is this : There was a popular *Error* that had been long current, against which *Tacitus* was by no means Proof ; and I make no question, it was what did very much prejudice him against the *Christians*, and put him into an ill Humour as to their Religion. The Error was this, in *confounding* the *Christians* with the *Jews* so much, as to make no Difference between one and the other : The *Gentiles* proceeded upon this Principle ; that the Origine of both People was one and the same ; that they had the same sacred Books ; and that they worshipp'd the same God : Now, 'tis well known what Antipathy, what Contempt *Tacitus* had for the whole *Jewish* Nation, for their Ceremonies, their Behaviour, and their Religion in general : We need only turn to the *fifth* Book of his History, where we see the many Falshoods and Calumnies rais'd against that unhappy People, the *Jews*. He speaks of them, as a cursed, detestable sort of People, both in Respect of their abominable Crimes, and their infamous Superstitions. And 'tis on Account of these Calumnies, that *Tertullian* in his *Apologetick*, calls *Tacitus* a great *Lyer*. For *Tacitus*, first of all, advances it as a Truth, in the most serious Manner, that the *Jews* came from the Island of *Crete*, and that their *Name* was deriv'd from Mount *Ida* ; that in Process of Time, these *Jews* being driven out of *Egypt*, where they had taken Refuge, had like to have all perish'd by *Drought* in the Desarts of *Arabia* (where they wander'd for a long Time under

under the Conduct of their *Chief Moses*, had not a Company of *wild Affes* that were kicking and frisking about upon the Rock, shew'd them the Way to a Fountain, for quenching their Thirst; and this stupid People, says he, by Way of Acknowledgment for the Favour, in being reliev'd in such Extremity, did ever after worship the *Head* of a wild *Afs*, as their God and great Deliverer.

B. This is a very odd Story, I must confess; and I should be glad to know where *Tacitus* had it.

A. This and other silly *Stories* of the like Nature, that you meet with in *Tacitus*, 'tis easy to see, were all fetch'd from the Works of that celebrated Grammarian of *Alexandria*, one *Apion*, an avow'd Enemy of the *Jews*: This *Apion* the Emperor *Tiberius*, by way of Derision, used to call *Cymbalum Mundi*, a noisy Fellow, or a great Braggadockio: His Boastings were so intolerable, that nothing less than *Immortality* was to be the Portion of such, to whom he dedicated any of his Books. *Pliny jun.* speaks every whit as contemptibly of *Apion*, in his *Preface* to his Uncle's *Natural History*, where you may find an Account of this Matter. 'Tis very certain, that this *Apion* was the Man, that first invented this ridiculous Fable of the *Jews* worshipping the *Head* of an *Afs*; and in those bloody *Invectives* which he publish'd against that People, he gives it out with the same Assurance, that this *Head*, which was of massy Gold, was found under the Foundation of the
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Sanctuary, when the fam'd *Antiochus*, during the Time of the *Maccabees*, pillag'd the City and Temple of *Jerusalem*. Now these idle Tales first fram'd by *Apion*, and then adopted by *Tacitus*, gain'd such Footing in the World, that they generally pass'd for establish'd Truths, and (what was generally the Case with the *Christians*) they soon suffer'd under the like Imputation with the *Jews*. The *Christians* were charg'd with worshipping the Head of an *Ass* in their private Assemblies; and this absurd Report obtain'd such a general Belief, that, in the Emperor *Severus's* Reign, they insulted the *Christians* on that Account, by publicly exposing a Picture, wherein was to be seen a ridiculous Figure of this pretended *Deity*; a sort of a petty Monster, with the long Ears of an *Ass*; a Horn or Hoof instead of a Right Hand, in which was placed a great Book open; the Figure it self muffled up with a *Doctor's* long Robe; and at the Bottom of the Picture was this Legend, *Christianorum Deus Ononichites*. The Particulars you may read at your Leisure, if you please, in *Minutius Felix* and *Tertullian*, their Apologeticks.

B. You have said enough of *Tacitus*, to convince me, how much he was prejudiced against Christianity; and therefore, I think, I may in Justice own to you, that his *Evidence* ought to have the greater Weight, whenever you please to produce it; and I hope you'll excuse the Trouble I have given you in making these *Digressions*.

A. Since

A. Since what I have said of *Tacitus* adds Weight, in your Opinion, to the *Evidence* I am going to produce, it shou'd not, methinks, be call'd a *Digression*; and therefore I had rather you wou'd think, I have not been *out of the Way* at all, whilst I have been talking of *Tacitus*. To proceed then; notwithstanding the Spite and groundless Malice you have observ'd in this *Historian* against the *Christian Religion*, he has produced irrefragable Arguments in its Defence. This, as I observ'd of old *Phlegon*, was not done *wittingly* or *willingly*, but by the Appointment of him who governs all Things; and yet, whenever we read the *fifth* Book of his History, one wou'd think he writ it on purpose to bear his Testimony to *one* of the brightest Truths contain'd in the Gospel.

B. I make no Objections, as to an over-ruling Providence in this Affair: But I think, if you are minded, that the Evidence you are going upon, shou'd have its full Force, and effectually serve the Interest of the Cause you are defending, 'tis necessary your *Historian* appear to have done these *two* Things; the one is, that there be an exact and particular Account given of such *Facts* in his History, as are particularly mention'd in *Christ's* Prophecy: The other is, that though your *Historian* be allow'd to have no Religion himself, there ought to be the Marks, however, of *Fidelity* in what he relates; and moreover, his Relation ought to raise in the Minds of his Readers a thorough Sense and Conviction

Conviction that there was something *divine* and extraordinary in those *Facts* relating to the Punishment of the *Jewish* Nation.

A. What you require is but reasonable ; and I will now let you see that *Tacitus's* Account of this Matter fully answers in both Respects ; and no *Facts* cou'd have been recorded in a Manner, more advantageous to the *Christian* Cause, than they are done by this *Heathen* Writer, and also by *Josephus* the Jew. They were both profess'd Enemies of our Religion, and I shall produce the Testimonies of both ; each supporting one another. The several Instances of divine Vengeance *foretold* to the Jews in the Gospel, and in the Prophets, may be reduc'd to *five* or *six* general Heads, which will easily comprehend all the rest. 1. The Siege of *Jerusalem*. 2. The Divisions and Civil Wars amongst the *Jews* themselves. 3. The Delusions of false Prophets amongst them. 4. A terrible Famine. 5. The taking and entire Subversion of that wretched City, as well as the Temple. 6. The Dispersion of, and Hardness of Heart in that unhappy People. Now these two *Chiefs* in History, (the *Roman* and the *Jew*) have inform'd us, that, about *thirty-eight* Years after our Saviour's Passion, whilst great Numbers were yet alive in *Jerusalem*, who had either a Share in his Death, or were Witnesses thereof, and recollected what he had prophesied to them ; this unfortunate City was for the *last* Time besieg'd in Form by *Titus* ; the Command of which his

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Father *Vespasian* had given him, being oblig'd himself to return into *Italy* to take Possession of the Empire. This young Prince, with vast Labour and Expence, encompass'd the City with a mighty Wall, fortify'd with Towers and Redoubts, as strong as the City it self had. But the War without the City was nothing in Comparison to *that* within it; where there were *three* Factions, all in Arms, falling foul on one another; cantoning themselves in *three* different Parts of the City; and filling the Whole with Blood and Carnage. Such was the Infatuation, that they were running continually about the Streets like Madmen; and those who were but suspected to desire Peace, and to have an End put to their general Calamity, were inhumanly put to Death for the same. A sore Famine, amidst this Blood, Rapine, and Violence, soon rag'd amongst them: They cou'd have no Succour from *without*, and yet there were *two* or *three* Millions of Souls to be maintain'd *within*; and still to increase their Misery, those *three* Factions conspiring to ruin one another, burnt those little Provisions that were left in their Magazines. And hence you may easily judge what the Miseries were that must befall 'em during the whole Time of the Siege.

B. I desire to know, if either of your Historians have observ'd the *Time* when that terrible *Famine* began, and how long the *Siege* lasted.

K

A. They

A. They inform us, that the Siege lasted near *five Months*; that it began in the Month of *April*, and that the *Famine* happen'd in the Month following. A *Measure* of Wheat or Barley was sold for a Talent, or about *one hundred and fifty Pounds* of our Money; and some sold their Houses and Estates to purchase that Way. The Famine increasing carried off whole Families at once; and nothing more common, than to see Men like Shadows in the Streets, trailing about full of Pain, and on a sudden tumbling down and giving up the Ghost in a fainting Fit. The poorer Sort were *presently* interr'd at the publick Expence, to prevent (if possible) the Infection spreading: But this Precaution was not long of any Service; when they began to throw their Dead over the Walls of the City: And one of their Deserters assur'd *Titus*, that from the fourteenth of *April* to the first of *July* following, *one hundred fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty* Corpses had been carry'd out at that one Gate alone, where he had been a Centinel, without reckoning such as their Parents had buried at their own Charge; the Stench of the *Jewish* Carcasses became a very great Nuisance to the *Roman* Camp; and as other Deserters inform'd 'em, the Besieged growing weary in thus carrying out their Dead, they laid 'em at last in Heaps in their greatest Houses, and when full, they shut 'em close up. Tears were now no more to be seen, nor Groans any longer heard in *Jerusalem*; an implacable *Necessity*

ceffity had dried up the very Fountain of Grief; chill'd the Blood; and destroy'd all natural Affection; *the Love of many*, fays our Saviour, *fhall wax cold*; a fullen Silence prevail'd every where; no one complain'd for his Dead, nor yet lamented his own Condition; and feveral crept into their Father's *Tombs*, where they waited for Death, that they might not want a Grave. our Historian farther informs us, that whilft Affairs were in this melancholy Pofture, and Things reduc'd to the laft Extremity, there were not wanting factious difcontented Perfons, who broke open Peoples Houfes, rifling the Poor of a few Weeds and wild Plants which they had gather'd without the Walls of the City, and ran the Rifque of their Lives in doing it. They mafacred Women, as well as old Men, that offer'd to difpute parting with the little Bread that was left 'em; and the very Children, whose Fingers were too tenacious of a Morfel, had their Brains dash'd out for it. And yet, notwithstanding fuch Barbarity, the Historian obferves, that thefe Ruffians in a certain Houfe once retir'd with the utmoft Horror and Confufion, having surpriz'd a certain Gentlewoman, diftinguifh'd by her Birth and Fortune (*Mary* the Daughter of *Eleazar*) eating her own Son, that ſhe had fuckled; Famine and Defpair urging her to that inhuman Action. *Woe to them that give fuck in thofe Days*, fays our Saviour.

B. I would not willingly interrupt you in an Account you are giving, which is so very surprising in all its Parts; and surely your *Authors* must have been very sensible themselves that the Hand of God was in these Proceedings. But I think you said some Time ago, that the Famine began the very next Month after the Siege; and that the Siege lasted near five Months: You have likewise taken notice of great Numbers destroy'd by their own Swords and unheard-of Barbarities, as well as by Famine: Now, whence was it, or what Reason can be assign'd, that in spite of such a long Train of Misfortunes, and such dreadful Extremities to which I perceive they were reduc'd, they should still hold out so long, and continue themselves wretched with so much Obstinacy?

A. There was a general *Infatuation*, occasion'd chiefly by a great Number of *false Prophets*, that were risen up amongst them; who were every Day deluding 'em by vain Promises of an infallible, miraculous and speedy Deliverance, dinning in their Ears, as coming from the Lord, such Expressions as these, *I will break the Roman Bonds asunder; and the Day of Salvation is at hand*; when yet they were just upon the Brink of Destruction, and no Way left to escape the powerful Hand of *Titus*. Thus they were amusing themselves with imaginary Victories; and their Extravagancy was carried to such a Height, that no less than the Empire of the Universe

was

was in a little Time to be their Lot.* I don't therefore wonder to see you surpriz'd at this Account; and I frankly own to you, 'tis such an *Infatuation* (take it with all its Circumstances) that would not easily gain Credit, were it not attested in the Manner it is. Besides *Josephus*, *Tacitus* † himself tells us, " That the *Jews* were " firmly persuaded from some old Prophecies in " their sacred Books, that the Eastern World was " at that Time to resume its Strength, and that " such, as shou'd prescribe Laws to the Universe, " were to come out of the Land of *Judaea*. There were three remarkable *Factions*, I observ'd to you some Time ago, in *Jerusalem*; *Eleazar*, who was at the Head of one of them, was after some Time defeated, and his Force dissipated; the other two Chiefs, nam'd *John* and *Simon*, thereupon acted like two Tyrants; who apply'd to themselves those Prophecies that had already been accomplish'd in the Person of Christ, and could only be understood as relating to his *spiritual* Kingdom; and moreover they cou'd not doubt, after so noble a Defence made by the *Jews*, but they should be recogniz'd as *two* Kings, as was formerly done in the Case of the *Mackabees*; and having driven away the *Romans*, they would have nothing left to do, but to share the Government of the World between 'em.

B. Gros

* Dion, L. 60.

† Hist. L. 5.

B. Gross Stupidity ! and a severe Punishment it was indeed : But what might the Behaviour of *Titus* be, when he saw such Obstinacy in this miserable People ?

A. *Titus*, tho' he was full of Wrath at these Proceedings of the *Jews*, was however unwilling to destroy *Jerusalem*; and therefore, as *Dion* has remark'd, he shew'd double Diligence for saving it, offering 'em a General *Amnesty*, if they would think better of it, and return to their Duty : But all the generous Offers made by that Prince were insolently rejected. *Titus* at length began to think of another Method, that he judg'd more likely to work upon 'em, and to bring 'em over to their Obedience ; and that was the *Mediation* of our Historian *Josephus* ; for first of all, he was a *Jew* and a Fellow-Citizen ; he was one of their Priests, and an able Man for managing such an Affair ; his Birth moreover, as well as his Profession, being a *Pharisee*, had distinguish'd him amongst them ; he had but three Years before commanded forty thousand Men in *Galilee*, and sustain'd a long Siege against *Vespasian*, who after taking the Place, and *Josephus* too Prisoner, soon gave him his Liberty to go where he pleas'd ; for *Josephus* had ingratiated himself, by foretelling that both *Vespasian* and his Son shou'd be Emperors ; which, tho' *then* unlikely, seem'd *now* to be near accomplish'd in good earnest.

B. This Project of *Titus* seems to have been well form'd for answering the Ends he had in view : But what was the Success ?

A. *Titus* having sent for *Josephus* from *Alexandria*, whither he was retir'd, dispatch'd him several Times with Terms to the *Jews* in *Jerusalem*. Our Historian relates himself in his *seventh* Book, how in regard to the Orders he had receiv'd from that Prince, and the natural Affection he had for his Country, he often appear'd before the Bulwarks of the City, and there raising his Voice, proclaim'd aloud to those that were on Duty, that they wou'd not perish thro' their Obstinacy, but speedily prevent their entire Ruin and Destruction, which was inevitable, without imploring the Mercy of the Conqueror ; " Save the Holy City, says he, save the Temple, " the Wonder of the World, which even *Titus* " is *unwilling* to destroy ; save the whole Nation " and your selves." *Josephus* was not disheartened, though at the same Time his good Advice met with no other Return from his Fellow Citizens than Reproaches, Invectives, and grievous Affronts. " I wou'd still merit more at " your Hands, replies *Josephus*, in this obstinate " Way of mine, if it might be of Service in " saving an ungrateful People, who seem, by too " evident Marks of a divine Vengeance, to be " doom'd to a total Destruction." But *Josephus* at length was forc'd to retire, after a dangerous Wound receiv'd in his Head by a Stone thrown down from the Ramparts ; and it was not without great Difficulty and fresh Hazard, that they brought

brought *him off* into the *Roman Camp*. At length the Fortrefs *Antonia* being taken by *Storm* about the Beginning of *August*, the *Temple*, that stood near it, soon had the like Fate, notwithstanding the *desperate* Fury that was shewn in its Defence: For as to the *Temple* in particular, the *Jews* thought their Happiness wrapp'd up in the Preservation of that Place; and, as another eminent Heathen * Writer remarks, they flatter'd themselves that Victory and Felicity wou'd be their Lot, if they fell with their Temple. About three Weeks after this, the upper Part of the City, where was Mount *Sion*, being taken, with its three Citadels, *Jerusalem*, according to our Saviour's Prediction, was entirely overthrown and brought to its fatal End by the Conquerors; who, out of so many magnificent Buildings, left only three Towers standing, as a Monument of their Victory, as well as of the ancient Grandure of the City.

B. I thank you for this melancholy and surprizing Account of *Jerusalem*. The *Scripture* Account you gave before, does indeed (as you observed) look more like an *Historical* Abridgement of what was past, than a *Prophecy* of what it seems, happen'd so many Years after. But, methinks, the *Heathen* Historians ought to have made Apologies to their Readers for delivering such Things as Matters of *Fact*, and yet so very *unaccountable*.

A. You

* *Dion.*

A. You requir'd *Fidelity*, and very justly, some Time ago, in our *Historians* ; and, I think, they have given sufficient Proof of it in this Case ; and you see, we cannot hear or read the Account given by them of these *Facts* relating to the Punishment of the *Jewish* Nation, but it necessarily works a Conviction in our Minds, that there must have been something *divine* and extraordinary in those *Facts* : And, I think, what you allow'd of your self, is but reasonable, *viz.* That they could not well write in that Manner, and not be sensible that the Hand of God was in such Proceedings ; but then, they knew not the Reason of so severe a Visitation, which was *putting to Death the Lord of Glory ; a crucify'd Saviour was a stumbling Block* to the one, as it was *Foolishness* to the other. But, after all, I must grant, there are some *Facts*, that seem almost incredible ; and particularly, I think, the very *Numbers* said by these *Historians* to have perish'd in *Jerusalem* is a *Fact*, that may be thought to need an Apology, as much as any other : But no Apology can or ought to be thought necessary, where *Facts* are so unquestionably attested, as they are here : No History has better Vouchers, than that of this fatal Siege of *Jerusalem* : It has the Authority of Authors of the first Rank or Figure in the World ; Authors, who were either Eye-Witnesses or Contemporaries, or else such as liv'd soon after those Times : And as to Ecclesiastical Writers, they are all unanimous and punctual in the Relation of this memorable

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Event,

Event, to evidence an entire *Accomplishment* of our *Scripture* Prophecies in this Respect: Add to this, what the *Jews* themselves still relate to this Day, and the miserable *Spectacles* they themselves are to the whole World, occasion'd by that general *Dispersion*: Put all these Things together, and I leave you to judge, whether any reasonable Person can desire stronger Evidence for the Truth of any Fact?

B. Since you mention'd that Particular, of the great *Numbers* that perish'd in *Jerusalem*, what might the Whole amount to?

A. The *Numbers*, consider'd these several Ways;
 1. Of such as died by Famine and Sicknefs;
 2. Of such as perish'd by their own Civil Fury;
 and, 3. Of such as fell by the Hand of the Enemy; amounted in all, to *eleven hundred thousand Persons*, in the Space of four or five Months Time. This is what *Josephus* expressly affirms; and 'tis what he wrote, not only in regard to Posterity, (which might be impos'd on,) but for to be read by many illustrious *Romans*, who had served in that memorable Siege: To be read in particular, by the Emperor *Vespasian*, and by *Titus* himself; to whom he had the Honour of presenting this History; and who was pleas'd with his own *Hand* to attest the Truth of the Whole; and also to order, that those *Memoirs*, and no other, should serve for writing that Part of the History of his Reign: In short, *Titus* order'd this Work of *Josephus* * to be plac'd in the

* *Joseph. in vitâ suâ.*

the publick Library, with a proper *Encomium*; the Author's Statue was cast, and set up in *Rome*; and King *Agrippa*, who accompanied *Titus* in this Expedition, did our Historian the Honour of writing to him *three* or *four score* Letters, which contain an ample Testimonial of *Josephus's* Sincerity.

B. Sir, I cannot question the Sincerity of your Author, after this Account that you have given of him and his Work; and upon recollecting one Particular, which just now comes into my Mind, I begin to think, that there is not so much need (as I thought before) for your Authors making *Apologies*, in relating so many *Facts* seemingly incredible: For as to this frightful Number in Particular of *eleven hundred thousand* Persons, you just mentioned, it does not appear so very strange, when 'tis consider'd, what Authors, *Heathen, Christian, and Hebrew*, do all unanimously affirm to be true, that no People in the World did so increase and multiply as the *Jews*.

A. Your Observation is very just; and the single Family of *Jacob* is a remarkable Instance, who during their Sojourning in *Egypt* *two hundred and fifteen* Years, multiply'd to the Number of *six hundred thousand Men*, without reckoning Women and Children. Those Authors, from whom you made your Observation, will likewise tell you, that *Jerusalem* was one of the most populous Cities in the East; and they observe moreover, that *Titus* having begun the Siege the first

Day of the Feast of *unleavened Bread*, there was consequently a general *Rendezvous* of the *Jews* there, from all Parts of the World, to keep their Passover ; by which Means infinite Numbers were shut up, without any Means left 'em of getting out again.

B. Did *Divine Vengeance* stop here, or how did it fare with the *Jews* after the City was taken ?

A. The grievous Famine, that had raged amongst 'em, forc'd a great many to pilfer and plunder after the *Romans* had enter'd ; and, as our Historian informs us, the Number of those pilfering *Jews* was so very great, that the *Romans*, to terrify others from the like Practices, commonly crucify'd about *five hundred* a Day of them ; infomuch that at last, says he, there was neither Wood to be got to make Crosses, nor room to set 'em up in ; and whilst these Punishments were inflicting, the *Arab* and *Egyptian* Soldiers cut the Throats of about *two thousand* *Jews* besides, ripping up their Bellies to find the Gold, which, 'twas bruited in the *Roman* Camp, the *Jews* had swallow'd ; and *Titus* with all his Power, found it pretty difficult to put a Stop to such inhumane Practices. As to other Places where the *Jews* were, the like Tokens of divine Wrath appear'd ; *eight thousand* *Jews* were massacred in *Joppa* ; *ten thousand* in *Damascus* ; *thirteen thousand* in *Scythopolis* ; *fifteen thousand* in *Gadara*, or the Parts beyond *Jordan* ; *twenty thousand* in *Cæsarea* ; *fifty thousand* in the City
of

Alexandria, which Place seem'd to be floating with the Blood; and the dead Bodies lying in Heaps in the Streets and publick Places: One in particular, says the Historian, named *Simon*, the Son of *Saul*, being fill'd with Horror and Despair, catch'd hold of the hoary Hairs of his aged Father, and slew him; then cut the Throats of his Mother, Wife, and Children, and afterwards dispatched himself with his own Sword; in short, (not to dwell any longer on this melancholy Subject,) the Number of *Jews* destroy'd, on several Occasions, in this War, amounted to *thirteen hundred thirty seven thousand, four hundred and ninety Persons*, besides others that could not easily be brought into the Account. I have now given you a full View of the terrible Vengeance of an offended God, executed on a miserable People, for *two* of the greatest Crimes that Mortals were capable of committing; I mean, their putting to Death the *Lord of Life and Glory*, and then obstinately adhering to what they had done, without the least Signs of Repentance. This terrible Vengeance was foretold by the *Prophets* many Ages before; but it was *Jesus Christ* himself, who was to denounce it to the *present* Generation, that was to feel the dismal Effects of it; and this Vengeance was denounc'd in Terms so express; the bloody Scene drawn with such strong Lines; represented with such distinguishing Marks and Circumstances attending the fatal Blow, that (as both of us have already observed in our Turns) it looks more like a short *History*,

tory, than a plain simple Prophecy. *Verily I say unto you, all these Things shall come upon this Generation : O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto Thee : How often wou'd I have gather'd thy Children together, as a Hen doth gather her Brood under her Wings ; and ye would not ? Behold, your House is left unto you desolate.** What a heavenly *Pathos* is there in these Words ! He was the *express Image of his Father*, and, as such, he expostulates with his disobedient Children : Observe the *Antithesis* — *How often would I — But ye would not.* — He had called upon them long before, under the *Jewish Dispensation*, by *Angels*, by *Prophets*, by *just Men* ; and now he did it in his own Person for *three Years* together, by *Miracles*, by *Exhortations*, by *Threatnings* ; all done to retrieve 'em from a State of *Misery, dead in Trespasses and Sins* ; that by embracing the *New Covenant*, they might become *one Fold under one Shepherd* ; that by their Faith and Repentance they might have engag'd him to *defend 'em under his Wings, and to make 'em safe under his Feathers*,† (a proverbial Speech common amongst the Jews :) His *Faithfulness and Truth* would have been their *Shield and Buckler* ; and the impending Storm of divine Vengeance would happily have been removed far from them : But, alas ! He beheld the City, and wept over it, saying, *if thou hadst known, even Thou, at least in this thy Day, the Things which*

* Mat. xxiii.

† Psal. xci.

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which belong unto thy Peace! But now they are hid from thine Eyes.||

B. I have observ'd already, you may remember, that your *two* Authors cou'd hardly give such a surprizing Account of these Things, but that they must have been sensible themselves that the *Hand of God* was in it: But does this appear from any express Acknowledgment of their own?

A. The Acknowledgments of both of them are very express to that Purpose; that there were in those Proceedings something truly *miraculous* and *divine*. *Tacitus*, though in his Conduct he appears to have been notoriously loose and prophane, yet in this Case of the *Jewish* Desolation and their final Destruction, he says, That it was declar'd both from *Heaven*, and on *Earth*, by such unusual and frightful Prodigies, that neither Prayers nor Sacrifices cou'd avert it.* And when he comes to Particulars, he says, That whole Battalions were seen engaging in the Air, and that their Arms clash'd and glitter'd in the Rencounter.† The other Historian, *Josephus*, is more particular, who says, this happen'd towards Sun-set upon the *twenty-second* Day of *May*; that these airy Legions were seen in all the Country, and seem'd to spread and extend their fiery Chariots, as if they were forming a Siege.

B. This

|| Luke xix.

* Evenerant prodigia quæ neque Hostiis neque votis piare fas habet Gens Superstitioni obnoxia, Religionibus adversa. L. V.

† Visæ per Cœlum concurrere Acies, rutilantia Arma.

B. This Account puts me in Mind of what happen'd between two and three hundred Years before, when *Antiochus*, firnam'd *Epiphanes*, took *Jerusalem*. There were the like Prodigies, tho' rather greater, ushering in that remarkable Profanation of the Temple, and Cruelties exercis'd on the *Jewish* Nation. This Account we have from the *Macchabean* History, you know, and I suppose you do not question the Authority.

A. The Authority in that *Respect* is very good, and I thank you for recollecting in so proper a Time: If you please, we'll read the Passage—*And then it happen'd, that through all the City of Jerusalem, for the Space almost of forty Days, there were seen Horsemen running in the Air, in Cloth of Gold, and armed with Lances, like a Band of Soldiers; and Troops of Horsemen in Aray, encountring and running one against another, with shaking of Shields and Multitude of Pikes or Staves, and drawing of Swords, and casting of Darts, and glittering of golden Ornaments, and Harness of all Sorts: Wherefore every Man prayed that that Apparition might turn to Good, 2 Mac. 5.*

B. Has *Tacitus* recorded any other Prodigies or extraordinary Occurrences among the *Jews*, that preceded their Destruction?

A. Yes; two or three more, and those very remarkable; which, he says, happen'd in the very Temple, and the very same Year with the former. The Temple first of all, as he informs us, was illuminated on a sudden, in a dark Night,

as if it had been Noonday; * and *Josephus* more particularly remarks, that this happen'd about the *third* Hour after Midnight, and the *eighth* Day of *April*; which, as it fell out, was the Day of the *Passover* that Year, and was look'd upon by the most judicious, as a Sign of the *Temple's* being to be destroy'd by Fire, as it was accordingly *five* Years after. Whilst the same *Passover* was kept, the *East* Door of the *Temple*, which was made of *Brass*, and so heavy, that it requir'd *twenty* Men to shut it at Night, (secur'd by Iron Bars and otherways in the strongest Manner) open'd nevertheless of its own Accord all of a sudden, about Midnight†. *Josephus's* Remark is, that God hereby signify'd he wou'd soon open and deliver up the *Temple* to the *Gentiles*. The same Year, upon the Day of *Pentecost*, when the Priests went into the *Temple* at Night, according to Custom, to do their Duty, they soon heard a hideous Noise, and perceiv'd something to move about in the *Sanctuary*; after which, upon its moving out of that sacred Place, they heard a Voice distinctly pronouncing and repeating the following Words, *Let us go hence, Let us go hence*. *St. Chrysostom* || says they were *Angels*, the Guardians of the *Temple*, who having long waited (but in vain) the *Jews* Amendment, declar'd at last boldly, that they were quitting the Place, which God now disallow'd

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* Subito Nubium igne collucere Templum, L. V.

† Expansæ repente Delubri Fores. Tac. L. V.

Hom. 64. in Joseph.

low'd of, though honour'd with his more immediate Presence for above a thousand Years before. *Tacitus*, who (as usual) gave every Thing of this Kind a Turn in the *Pagan* Way, pretended that they were *the Gods* that went out of the Temple, and that the Noise and Stir that was made, was the Sign and Effect of their so going out*. But after all that has been observ'd, as wonderful and extraordinary in this Affair, I take the actual burning of the Temple, with the several Circumstances duly consider'd, to be as great a Prodigy as any of the former. 'Tis certain, that *Titus* did all he cou'd to save it, notwithstanding the strong Remonstrances made to him, how that the *Jews* were so attach'd to their Temple, that they wou'd ever revolt so long as it stood. *Titus* was still obstinate in their Favour, for preserving such a stately Edifice. But Historians are not agreed in assigning any certain Reason of such Proceeding; whether it was purely owing to his natural Temper, or whether Religion had any Influence, (for he wou'd often say, *He was not come to fight against Heaven*;) or whether there was a laudable Ambition of putting the *Romans* in Possession of a Structure that was look'd upon as *one of the Wonders of the World*, and thereby perpetuating the Name of *Titus* the Conqueror. Be that as it will, the fatal Hour was come, and Heaven had so decreed, that it shou'd

* *Audita major humanâ Vox : Excedere Deos : Simul ingens motus excedentium. L.V.*

thou'd be no longer in the Power of Conqueror or Conquered to save the *Temple* from utter Ruin. A Roman Soldier, by a divine Impulse (says *Josephus*) taking a Parcel of Firebrands and by the Help of his Fellow-Soldiers mounting up to one of the Windows, hurl'd the Fire in such a Manner, that the Flame soon became general, and in a little Time seiz'd the inner Part of that noble Building.

B. Since there was such a strong Inclination in *Titus* to save it, how did he behave on this Occasion?

A. His Behaviour was still answerable to his former Conduct; and he was very sensible, that he was the Instrument of divine Vengeance, and not the Conqueror himself only. *Titus* was just gone to repose himself, after a great Fatigue the Day before, when he and his principal Officers gave the best Orders they could for extinguishing the Fire; but the Uproar and Disorder was now so great, that his Commands, instead of being executed, were scarce minded, or any Notice at all taken of them by the Soldiers; for when they had once discover'd, that the very *outside* of the *Holy Place* was plated with Gold, and consequently concluded what immense Riches they shou'd find within-side, they began to be more outrageous, valuing neither the Intreaties nor the Threats of *Titus*, but obstinately persisting to kindle the Fire in one Place, as fast as their Prince was quenching it in another. And thus the *Temple* was laid in Ashes; and

(as it has been observ'd) this was done in the same Month, and upon the same Day, when the former Temple was destroy'd by *Nabuchadonosor*, a little more than *six hundred Years* before.*

B. You said just now, if I remember right, that *Titus* was sensible himself, that he was the *Instrument* of God in these Victories he had obtain'd over the *Jews*. A glorious Reflection for an old *Roman* to make! And where's the *Christian* General that does the like? But pray, Sir, what Authority have you for saying this of *Titus*?

A. His own Words, and his Behaviour after his Victories, are both Witnesses to the Truth of what I said. *Titus* being deeply affected and astonish'd at the mighty Things he had seen done, constantly refus'd all Addresses and Congratulations from the Cities and neighbouring Provinces; their Panegyricks always met with this Answer; *That it was not he that had vanquish'd; that what he had done, was lending his Hand for executing the Wrath of Heaven; and that he sincerely acknowledg'd, he was no more than a weak Instrument in the doing of it.* This remarkable Saying of *Titus* we have preserv'd to us in as remarkable a Manner, by *Philostratus* in the Life of the famous Impostor *Appollonius Thyaneus*; * Providence so ordering it, that what was wanting in one *Heathen* Writer, shou'd be supply'd in another. After this, 'tis less to be wonder'd at, what other *Historians* tells us of *Titus*,

* 2 Kings xxiv.

† Lib. 6. c. 14.

Titus, that when he had taken a View of the outward Fortifications of the *Temple*, and saw with Amazement that all his batt'ring Rams had done no Damage, he said several Times by the way of an Exclamation, *That if Heaven had not fought for him, meer human Force had never been able to effect what was done.* We are not now to wonder, if he refus'd Crowns of Gold that were offer'd him for doing Honour to his Victories; and that both *He* and his Father *Vespasian* wou'd by no Means accept of the Title of *Conqueror of Judea*, tho' the *Roman* Senate wou'd fain have given it, * In short, those two Princes had too great an Insight into Things, not to know and perceive, what their Modesty likewise made 'em acknowledge, that the *Jewish* Nation could never have suffer'd such an Overthrow, if divine Vengeance had not visibly effected it: But still they were at a Loss to account for such *Vengeance*, or what that detestable *Crime* might be that brought such swift and general Destruction; which really was, *crucifying the Lord of Life and Glory.*

B. I own, you have sufficiently prov'd what I ask'd of you concerning *Titus*: Both Father and Son seem to have had rare Accomplishments; and such Accomplishments 'tis plain, did serve better to display the Works of Providence in this wonderful Scene of Affairs in *Judea*. But, if I am not mistaken, notwithstanding all their Modesty, those Princes had some *Monuments* to per-

* Neuter Judaicus cognominatus. *Dio. in Vita Vesp.*

perpetuate their Names on this Account: Pray, inform me.

A. You say right; and such Monuments are yet remaining to this Day. But 'twas done by Order of the *Senate*, or, to speak more properly, by the particular Appointment of Heaven. One of the Monuments are *Medals* of *Titus* and *Vespasian*, struck in Brass, Silver, and Gold, (to be seen in the Collections of the Curious,) having on the Reverse a *Captive sitting and lamenting at the Foot of a Palm-Tree* with this Legend, *JUDEA CAPTA*. The other Monument, which is the most considerable, is that stately triumphal *Arch* erected at *Rome* against the Day that *Titus* enter'd the City, where in *Basso-Relievo* of Marble is seen at this Day the Figure of that Prince, together with the *Golden Table*, the *Golden Candlestick*, with the seven Branches supported by eight Persons; and other remarkable Spoils, brought from *Judea* and the Temple.

B. I suppose you are now pretty well tired; I'll take my Leave, and go Home, and make the best Reflections I can upon this Accomplishment of such a *Fundamental Prophecy*, as I find it both in the Old and New Testament. I thank you for the Pains you have taken, and hope soon to pay my Respects to you in this Place.

A. One Thing occurs, which I desire, you would take along with you: 'Tis a very remarkable *Prophecy* of the two Apostles *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*, relating to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, made by them when they were deliver'd up to

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Nero by the *Jews*, about the Year of our Lord 66. 'Tis a very curious Fragment, and being so well attested, it were much to be wish'd it had been plac'd with the other *Acts* of the Apostles, and made *Canonical*. It was collected and committed to writing by the primitive Christians: 'Tis recorded by *Lactantius*,* in his *Institutions*; and *Phlegon*, whose Honesty and Integrity we took Notice of in our last Conference, whose Testimony is unquestionable, and who writ but about *forty* or *fifty* Years after this Prophecy of the Apostles, says expressly in his *Olympiads*,† that *St. Peter's Predictions to the Jews concerning their Destruction, had been all exactly fulfill'd*. And for farther Satisfaction in this Matter, we need only read *Origen's* second Book writ against *Celsus*. Now the *Apostles* declar'd to the *Jews* as follows, " That the Time
 " pointed out by *Jesus Christ* for their final De-
 " struction, was nigh at Hand; that *Jerusalem*
 " shou'd be besieg'd, and laid entirely waste;
 " that they should suffer Famine so very grie-
 " vous that they should eat one another; that
 " they should see their Wives and Children ex-
 " piring, and a general Ransack with Fire and
 " Sword; that they should be banished their
 " Country for ever, and become Fugitives or
 " Slaves to the End of the World; and that
 " all

*Sed & futura aperuit [Christus] illis omnia; quæ *Petrus* & *Paulus* Romæ prædicaverunt; & ea prædicatio in memoriam scripta permansit; in qua cum multa alia mira, tum etiam hoc futurum esse, dixerunt; ut post breve tempus immitteret Deus Regem, qui expugnaret Judæos, & Civitates eorum solo adæquaret, ipsos autem fame, sitique confectos obsideret, &c. *Lact.* l. iv. c. 21.

† *Olymp.* L. xiii. xiv.

“ all these Evils should befall ’em on Account
 “ of their Outrage and Offence committed against
 “ the Son of God, who had been plainly decla-
 “ red as *such* by the many Miracles wrought
 “ amongst them.” And now, my Friend, put
 all these Things together, that have passed be-
 tween us to Day concerning the Destruction of
Jerusalem; the surprizing Accomplishment of an-
 cient *Prophecies* relating thereto; the visible
 Marks of divine Vengeance, in the whole Pro-
 cedure; and acknowledg’d as *such*, but not
 rightly understood, by the *Jewish* and *Heathen*
 Writers, and even by *Titus* himself: After this,
 tell me what you think of *Revelation*? Whether
 our *Reason* is not sufficiently inform’d from the
Testimonies of Heathens, that these Things are
 so? That these *Facts* are true; and consequently
 that the *Scriptures*, where these Things are fore-
 told, are truly the *Word* of God, and as such to
 be regarded by us? I remember, in our former
 Conference, you said, the *Difficulty* you labour’d
 under, was, how we could by the Help of our *Rea-
 son* attain to a certain Knowledge of the *Truth* of
 those *Facts*, which we call the *Gospel Revelation*: I
 have undertaken to remove that *Difficulty* in a way
 that you justly own is unexceptionable, by *appeal-
 ing* to the Enemies of our Religion, who have
 (neither wittingly nor willingly) bore their Testi-
 mony to the Truth of it. The *miraculous* Eclipse,
 which was clear’d up and fully establish’d from
 such sort of *Testimony* at our last Meeting, does
 of it self (were there no other Evidence) suffi-
 ciently

ciently establish that grand *fundamental* Point, the *Divinity* of our blessed Saviour; and, I make no question, if you will but favour me with your Company two or three Times more, you will be convinc'd, that the Truth of the *Christian Religion* appears from *Heathen Testimonies*, not only in regard to *Facts*, but to the principal *Doctrines* likewise. Your Dispute about *positive Duties* will soon have an End, if without Prejudice you will use those Faculties that God has given you to judge with in these Matters. And remember what you have already agreed to at our first setting out, *That when by the Help of our Reason Revelation becomes establish'd, no Suggestion either against the Need of such a Revelation, or against our Obligation to receive it, ought to make any Impression upon us.*

B. I am still of the same Opinion: And as to my *Reason*, the new Book,* which our Society has lately publish'd, will bear me out, when I use it after the best Manner I can; The End is then answer'd, says that Book, for which God gave us our Faculties, and our Conduct is fully justify'd.

A. I like the Rule exceedingly; but till your Society practises accordingly, the End is not answer'd, nor their Conduct justify'd. Adieu. I wish you well home, and a quick Return to this Place.

* Christianity as Old as the Creation.

CONFERENCE III.

B. **G**OOD Morrow, Sir. You see I am very quick in making you this Visit; much sooner, indeed, than I intended at our parting: But when I came Home, and had carefully read over the *Prophecy*, and recollected, as well as I could, the Particulars of its *Accomplishment*, which were the *Subjects* of our last Conversation, I began to think, this Point had not been so fully *discussed* as it ought to be; or at least, as I could wish, for my own Satisfaction. My Meaning is, that this *Prophecy* of our Saviour has not been consider'd by us in its full View and Extent, as the express Words seem to require it shou'd be; for we learn from that *Prophecy*, not only the *Destruction* of *Jerusalem*, and the *Jewish* Nation, as also their *Dispersion*, which are Things already accomplish'd, and have been fully discoursed of; but we learn moreover something else very *material*, which is yet accomplishing; and which, according to your Commentators, will not have its final Completion, till *Jew* and *Gentile* at the End of the World shall join with the *Christian* in embracing the Gospel. You easily guess at the Passage; where the Marks of divine Vengeance are stamp'd upon the very Ground
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where the Holy City stood; and 'tis pronounced, that such Marks shall be as *lasting*, as the fugitive Condition of the People; so that all human Endeavours should prove in vain for *re-building* on that Ground where the *Temple* was founded. This *Part* of the Prophecy is very plain and exprefs, when our Saviour tells his Disciples*, *They [the Jews] shall fall by the Edge of the Sword, and shall be led captive into all Nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden under Foot of the Gentiles, until the Times of the Nations be fulfilled.* And this *Part* I desire may now have its due Consideration; and, if you can, pray inform me, whether such *Part* of the Prophecy has been *fulfilling* by any *signal* Marks of Divine Vengeance, in relation to that Place, in the succeeding Ages of the *Church*. For if such *Marks* shall appear, supported by good Authority, I readily grant, you will then have produc'd another very cogent Argument in Defence of *Christianity*.

A. I much rejoice at this good Disposition in my Friend; that he has read over the *Prophecy* with such Attention; that he has made such a judicious Remark on a *Deficiency* in our former discoursing of it; and that he has now given me an Opportunity of supplying that Defect; and as I hope in every Respect to his Satisfaction. As to the remarkable *Text* you just now quoted, the *Comment* you have made is easy and natural, and what the best Expolitors are agreed

in.* And to strengthen this Exposition, you will see presently that the Emperor *Julian* (the Apostate) did so understand this Text, as well as the Passage in *Daniel*, to which it alludes; the Prophet assuring us, *That the Desolation shall continue to the End.* *Julian* therefore thought, if he cou'd compass the building a *Temple* on the Ground where the former stood at *Jerusalem*, he shou'd elude the Force of this *Prophecy*, and render the Truth of the Holy Scriptures precarious. I shall now, therefore, according to your Request, farther inform you, that this very Emperor *Julian* did actually attempt, with all the Power, Cunning, and Expence possible, to build a *Temple* for the *Jews* where the *Temple* stood at *Jerusalem*; and that he was baffled in this Attempt with the greatest Marks of *divine* Displeasure, that you can imagine; attended with such fearful *Prodigies*, that they equal, if not exceed, those I took Notice of from *Tacitus* and *Josephus*, to have happen'd in the *Temple* some Time before its Destruction.

B. If *Julian* made this Attempt with such a Design as you say he did, it was indeed *daring* Heaven to assert its Honour, and the Truth of the *Prophecies*, by some extraordinary Punishment. But what *Authority* have you for these *Facts*, before you give any farther Account of them?

A. The
 * *Calcabitur à Gentilibus*, i. e. Inhabitabitur *Jerusalem* tanquam vile Oppidum ab exteris *Gentibus*, pressa jugo *Servitutis*. — *Donec impleantur*; — quasi dicat, usque ad finem mundi erit destructa, vel punietur per *Gentiles* Tempore scilicet & modo quo Deus statuit. *Vid. Menoch. Collect. Comment. ad Luc. xxi. 24.*

A. The *Authority* is in every Respect unexceptionable. The *Facts* I am going to relate, are attested by great Numbers of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, as well as *Christians*; but the *Authority* I shall chiefly insist on, is *Ammianus Marcellinus*; because he was not only an *eminent* Historian, but liv'd at the same Time; was in great Esteem with, and a zealous Defender of his Master *Julian*.

B. Please to give me some farther Account of this Author, that I may better judge how far I may rely upon what he says in this Matter.

A. Methinks, much more need not be said than what has been already. He had the Misfortune indeed of being bred a *Heathen*, and he liv'd and dy'd as such; but was remarkable for doing Justice to the *Christians* notwithstanding. Tho' he was strongly attach'd to *Julian*, yet he does not conceal his Vices; and tho' he was a *Soldier*, yet his Abilities were such, that he knew how to make a Difference in the Characters of the *Orthodox* or *Catholick*, and the *Arians*, at that Time of Day. Considering he was a *Greek* by Birth, and the Time wherein he wrote, the Purity of the *Latin* Language is not to be expected; but in every other Respect he is allow'd to be an accomplish'd *Historian*.

B. You say he was of the *Military* Profession: Did that allow him Time to write a History with such Exactness?

A. He was in some Respects like a *Cesar*, or a *Xenophon*: He was either Witness to all
the

the great Events in his Time, or had a good Share in them himself: But as to the compiling his History, he did it, after he had quitted his *military* Employments, retiring to *Rome*, that he might have the better Relish of Life the Remainder of his Days; having serv'd not only under *Julian*, but *Jovian*, *Valentinian*, and *Gratian*. 'Tis our Misfortune, that we have but *eighteen* Books left of the *one* and *thirty* which he compos'd; and the many fine Editions of *Ammianus Marcellinus*, with the Notes of several learned Men, are a sufficient Proof what Credit and Esteem this History has obtain'd in the World.

B. You need not say any more of your Author; and your having said this, will make me hear your Account from him with more Pleasure and Satisfaction. Please then, to let me know what *Julian's* Efforts were for rebuilding the Temple at *Jerusalem*; what hinder'd his Project; and whether in such *Obstacles* as he met with, there was any Thing *extraordinary* or *miraculous*, or such as evidently and undeniably prov'd the immediate Interposition of the *Almighty* in that Affair.

A. I am to observe to you first of all, that *Julian*, when he saw himself sole Master of the Empire, upon the Death of his Cousin *Constance*, thought the Time was come, when he need be no longer upon his Guard in Matters of Religion: Accordingly he try'd all Ways to restore *Idol-Worship*, and to establish *Pagan Superstitions*

perstitutions in general, which were then at their lowest Ebb, and well nigh expiring. By this Means the *Christian* Religion, if possible, was to be abolish'd; and he was so bold as to imagine, that in a little Time he shou'd abolish the very *Name* it self. The better to succeed in this Project, he form'd a *persecuting* Scheme, entirely *new*, none of his cruel Predecessors having acted like him. He was not contented in spiriting up the *Christians*, and furnishing them with Arms to destroy one another, whilst the *Arians* were openly protected by him; But he shamefully demean'd himself, in making his Application to the very *Jews*, who were become the Scum and Derision of the Universe, the better to accomplish the pernicious Ends he had in View. He writes to 'em accordingly, a very cunning, inveigling Letter, yet extant among his Epistles; where, " after having earnestly
 " begg'd their Prayers, he lets 'em know, that
 " he did not require 'em to pay any more Taxes,
 " as they us'd to do; and that he had caus'd
 " to be burnt all publick Entries that might any
 " ways affect 'em; *and then informs them*, that
 " the happy Time was now come, for retrieving
 " the ancient Glory of their Nation, for
 " re-establishing their Ceremonies, their Laws,
 " their Synagogues, their *Temple*; assuring them
 " withal, that as soon as he had ended the
 " *Persian* War, he wou'd rebuild *Jerusalem*
 " with greater Splendor than ever it was before,
 " and that he wou'd come and reside there him-
 " self,

“ self, and join with them in worshipping the
“ supreme Being.”

B. I must confess, this Letter seems to be
work'd up with a great deal of Policy, and Art;
and no doubt, it answer'd his End with the
Jews.

A. *Julian* did not stop here: He call'd to-
gether the *Chiefs* of the *Jewish* Nation from all
Quarters, and summon'd 'em to appear in his
Palace; where he reproach'd 'em severely, for
having liv'd so long, without *sacrificing* to their
God; when it was a Matter, he said, that was
so expressly enjoin'd 'em by their Law.

B. This was putting it home indeed; and to
be sure, *Julian* easily guess'd their *Answer* would
serve his Purpose: But how was it?

A. The *Jews* answer'd, That by their Law
they were not to sacrifice any where, but at *Je-
rusalem*; whence they were banish'd; and not
only at *Jerusalem*, but it was to be done in the
Temple there; which yet had been demolish'd
for about *three hundred* Years. 'Tis for that
very Reason, replies the Emperor, that I am
minded out of hand to rebuild your *Temple* at
my own Expence; that you may be able to do
your Duty, which has been interrupted so long
a Time; and the more to encourage 'em, he
made 'em believe, that he had recover'd one of
their sacred Volumes (buried under Ground)
which declar'd expressly, that in *his* *Reign*
their long Exile shou'd have an End, and their
Synagogue shine out in its former Lustre.

B. By

B. By this Time I make no question, but enough was said to engage the *Jews*; and I take it for granted, *Julian* and his Assembly broke up well satisfy'd on both Sides.

A. 'Tis true, as you observe: And *Julian*, to make good his Promise, orders the ablest Workmen throughout the Empire to attend. He makes one *Alypius* Surveyor-General of the Work, who was his Countryman, and trusty Friend, and who had for some Time been a Deputy-Governor here in *England*. He issues out Orders to his Treasury for very large Sums, to defray the Expences necessary for building this stately Edifice; and after this, he writes to the Governor of the Province to countenance the Undertaking; to forward the Execution; and to give him a regular Account how the Affair went on, which he had more at heart than any other. Our *Historian*, as a Heathen, wou'd have us understand that all this was done by *Julian* with an Intention of eternizing his Name only, by erecting such a Building: But *Julian*, who had been in *Holy Orders* himself, had consider'd the *Scriptures* we must allow, and he knew there were *Prophecies* (as I have observ'd to you already) expressly against his, or any other's succeeding in this Enterprize. His Proceedings in religious Matters, as I did before mention 'em to you, farther shew what his Intentions were; and Heaven in a most astonishing Manner (as you will hear presently) confirm'd the

Prophecies, and put a Stop to the daring Impiety of the *Apostate* Emperor.

B. Before I behold this terrible Scene of divine Vengeance, which I apprehend you are now ent'ring upon, please to let me know, how the *Jews* behav'd, after *Julian* had given Orders for rebuilding their Temple? as also how the *Christians* were affected at such a Proceeding?

A. There was an Excess of Joy among the *Jews*, as I believe you easily imagine: They flock'd together from all Parts of the World, to assist in raising their intended Temple. No Cost was spar'd for laying the Foundation with the greatest Pomp and Solemnity imaginable, and for hast'ning the Work.* By some Accounts, their very *Pick-Axes*, *Shovels* and *Baskets* for digging and carrying Earth were of *Silver*; and Women of the first Rank amongst them, were ambitious who shou'd give a helping Hand, by carrying it in the Lappets of their richest Garments. As for the *Christians*, the more considerate amongst them were not in the least affected, but slighted and despis'd these Efforts of *Julian*. *Cyril* Bishop of *Jerusalem* is a remarkable Instance: He was just return'd from Banishment, when these wild Projects were on Foot: But he did not appear any ways concern'd at the fresh Storms that were arising against the Church of Christ. He was Witness to the Insolence, to the Insults and Threats of
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* Theod. Lib. 3. c. 27.

the *Jews*; who were so puff'd up with their imaginary State of Happiness, that they talk'd of nothing less, than cutting off that good *Man*, or rather the whole Body of *Christians*, and treating 'em in like Manner, as they themselves had been treated by the *Romans*. But the venerable *Patriarch* was as little mov'd with their Threats as their vain Preparations: He made it his Business to comfort the *Faithful*, who were any ways terrify'd at such Proceedings; frequently reminding 'em, that the Word of God was *sure*, and that they ought to have a firm Reliance on those *Prophecies*,* the Truth of which they wou'd soon see confirm'd; that the Efforts of their Enemies deserv'd nothing but their Scorn and Contempt, because the Words of *Jesus Christ* were express; † he having positively assur'd them, that the *Temple should never be rebuilt*; maugre all the Attempts of the *Jews*, or even *Julian* their zealous Protector; and in fine, he told 'em boldly, that all the present Noise and Bustle wou'd end in nothing but in an entire Destruction of those few Stones yet left under-ground in the *Foundation* of the old *Temple*; the better still to verify literally the Saying of our Saviour, that there *shou'd not be left one Stone upon another*.

B. If you please, Sir, it may now be a proper Time to ask, what was the *Event* of this Enterprize, concerted I see with all the Artifice

* Ruffin. Lib. 10. c. 38.

† Theod. Lib. 3.

imaginable, and carried on with a very high Hand, and a great deal of Buffle and Clamour?

A. The Fact, as recorded by *Marcellinus*, * stands thus; "Whilst *Alypius* was busy in carrying on the Work, and the Governor of the Province as careful in giving him his Assistance, fearful Balls of Fire came out of the Earth near the Foundations; such Eruptions with repeated Shocks soon render'd the Place inaccessible, the Workmen themselves being sometimes burnt; and the fiery Element continuing its Opposition in this Manner, the Work was entirely laid aside." I desire, it may be observ'd, that an Account so distinct and remarkable, as this is, has been given us by an Historian, who was, at the very Time when these Things happen'd, one of the greatest Officers in the *Roman Empire*; that he was a great Admirer of *Julian*; and that he was as well able to inform himself of this wonderful Event, as any Man whatever; not only by common Fame, but from the Relation of thousands who had seen it with their own Eyes. "Thus, says *St. Chrysostome*, * the Word of *Jesus Christ* was not to be shaken; and the Sentence which he had pronounc'd was verifi'd in its utmost Extent. *Titus*, as I observ'd to you in our last Conference, made a vain Attempt to save the Temple; and *Julian* here strove, to as little purpose, to rebuild it. What God is pleas'd to pull down, is not to be rais'd up again by meer human Power;

* Lib. 18.

† Orat. 2. in *Judæos*.

Power; and what he thinks fit to uphold, is not to be thrown down by his Creatures.

B. Pray, how do the *Fathers* of the Church agree with *Marcellinus* in this Matter?

A. I don't much wonder at your asking that Question now, because you have been already convinc'd more than once, that the *Heathen* and *Christian* Writers support one another in many *Facts*; and consequently such sort of *Testimony* ought to have the greater Weight. The *Church* Historians, as well as *Fathers*, are generally more particular in relating this *Fact*, than *Marcellinus*; but they all confirm the Account which he has given; and three of the *Fathers*, which bear their *Testimony* in this Affair, *Gregory Nazianzen*, *St. Ambrose*, and *St. Chrysostome*, were living at the same Time when this *Prodigy* happen'd; the remarkable *Testimony* of *Cyril Bishop of Jerusalem*, has been already taken Notice of.

B. I desire to hear first of all the Account given by the *Church Historians*; and then, that given by the *Fathers* just mention'd, whose *Testimony*, as they were *Contemporaries* with *Julian*, I do agree, ought to be the more regarded.

A. The *Church Historians** inform us, " That whilst the Foundation of the *Temple* was a laying, a violent *Hurricane* carry'd away in a Moment, the *Lime*, *Sand*, or *Gravel*, with other Materials, that had been heap'd in prodigious Quantities: This was follow'd by an Earth-

*Theod. lib. iii. c. 27. Sozom. lib. v. c. 22. Ruffin. lib. x. c. 38, 39.

“ *Earthquake*, which suddenly hurl’d to a great
 “ Distance, on all Sides, vast great *Stones*, that
 “ had been brought together for the intended
 “ Building ; threw down the Houses all round
 “ about ; and turned topsy-turvy the *Galleries*,
 “ where Workmen in great Numbers were crush-
 “ ed to Death. The *Fire* at the same Time con-
 “ sumed the *Hammers, Saws, Chissels*, and other
 “ Tools, which were lodg’d in a Place under-
 “ ground : Streams of *Fire* rushing out of the
 “ Earth, and running here and there, burnt and
 “ destroy’d every Thing that came in its Way ;
 “ And yet the obstinate *Jews*, prompted by their
 “ own Inclination, and in Obedience to their
 “ Emperor, would still attempt to carry on the
 “ Work, till they were either forc’d back or
 “ consum’d by this *miraculous Fire*.” These His-
 torians farther add, that for a Night and a
 Day there appeared in the Air, from *Calvary* to
 Mount *Olivet*, the Figure of a *Cross*, within a
 Circle ; the whole gloriously illuminated ; which
 Appearance was like a Trophy set up in Token
 of a Victory obtain’d by *Jesus Christ* over his
 Enemies. They all agree likewise in telling us,
 that the *Cloaths*, as well of *Christians* as *Jews*,
 were at the same Time impress’d with the Fi-
 gure of the *Cross* ; which was so beautiful that
 no *Imbroidery* cou’d equal it ; and the *Jews*
 with all the Pains they took, could not raze it
 out. And, let me tell you, these *Historians* were
 chiefly no Friends to the *Orthodox* Party neither ;

Theo-

Theodoret was once a *Nestorian*,* but repented : *Socrates* and *Sozomen* were both of them *Novatians*;† And *Ruffinus* shew'd himself at one Time of his Life, like an envious surly *Presbyter*, in regard to the great *St. Jerome*. These Historians however, all liv'd at or near the Time, when this wonderful Event happen'd; and their Testimony in a Matter of Fact, is therefore not to be question'd.

B. 'Tis certain this Account makes the *Interposition* of Heaven still more remarkable : But do these *Fathers* of the Church, who liv'd at that Time, descend to such Particulars ?

A. *Cyril*, Bishop of *Jerusalem*, had a Foreknowledge given him by Heaven of the Fact in general, as you may observe from his Testimony I've given you already. *St. Chrysostom*,** who spoke of this Prodigy between twenty and thirty Years after it happen'd, told his Auditors publicly, that many of them might have been Eye-witnesses of these Things; and he assur'd 'em, that the Foundations were yet to be seen all lying open, as well as the Remains of that abandon'd Enterprize. And *Gregory Nazianzen* || declar'd as openly, that at the Time of his writing and discoursing, those indelible Crosses were still to be seen on the Cloaths of Jew and Christian. And *St. Ambrose*, in a Letter that he

* Deny'd that the Virgin *Mary* was the Mother of God, and asserted two Persons in Christ.

† Among the *νέοι*, or Puritans.

** Orat. 2. in *Judæos*.

|| Orat. 4.

he writ some Years after to *Theodosius*, firman'd, *The Great*, reminds him of this wonderful Event, as a Thing known throughout the Universe. In short, the *Fact* in general has been at all Times so well attested, that we may venture to say, since the Days of the *Apostles*, we meet with nothing either in its self more *astonishing*, or more *authentick*, than this. And what was the Effect of this dreadful *Repulse* that *Julian* met with? Nothing less than the Conversion of great Numbers, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; who had been Spectators of it, and forthwith desir'd to be *baptiz'd*. And certainly 'twas a noble Subject that *St. Chrysostom* * had on this Occasion to preach upon, when he told his Congregation, " that God was pleas'd to shew " the greatest Miracles for establishing the Di- " vinity of his Son, at a Time when Hell it " self made the greatest Efforts to subvert it. And surely it becomes us likewise to remember the Words of our blessed Saviour, † (let the Times be what they will) Upon this Rock [upon such Foundations whereby the Christian Religion shou'd soon be establish'd] will I build my Church; and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

B. Sir, before we take our Leave of *Jerusalem*, please to inform me, if you have any good Authority, what State or Condition that Piece of Ground is in (at this Time of Day) where the Temple stood?

A. We

* Hom. 4. in *Mat.*

† *Mat.* xvi. 18.

A. We have as good *Authority* as we can wish for in that Particular: We have it from a worthy Countryman of our own, who *view'd* the Piece of Ground (you enquire after) about *thirty* Years ago: But both *Jew* and *Christian* (it seems) are so far from having any Thing to do *there*, that they are not allow'd so much as to *tread* upon it. For more Satisfaction, I'll give you the Passage it self, which runs thus;*

" *Thursday, April 8.* we went to see the Palace
 " of *Pilate*, I mean the Place where they say it
 " stood: For now an ordinary *Turkish* House
 " possesses its Room. It is not far from the
 " Gate of *St. Stephen*, and borders upon the
 " *Area* of the *Temple* on the *North* Side. From
 " the *Terrace* of this House, you have a fair
 " Prospect of all the *Place* where the *Temple*
 " stood; indeed, the only good Prospect that is
 " allow'd you of it: For there is *no going with-*
 " *in the Borders of it*, without forfeiting your
 " Life, or, which is worse, your Religion. A
 " fitter Place for an *august Building*, cou'd not
 " be found in the whole World, than this *Area*.
 " It lies upon the Top of Mount *Moriab*, over-
 " against Mount *Olivet*, the Valley of *Jehosa-*
 " *phat* lying between both Mountains. This
 " *Area*, as far as I cou'd compute by walking
 " round it *without*, is *five hundred and seventy*
 " of my Paces in *Length*, and *three hundred and*
 " *seventy* in *Breadth*; and one may still discern
 P " Marks

* See Mr. *Maunderell's* Journey from *Aleppo* to *Jerusalem* at *Easter*, 1697. p. 106. Fourth Edit.

“ Marks of the great Labour that it cost, to cut
 “ away the *hard Rock*, and to level such a spa-
 “ cious *Area* upon so strong a Mountain. In
 “ the Middle of the *Area* stands at present a
 “ *Mosque* of an *octogonal* Figure, suppos'd to be
 “ built upon the same Ground, where anciently
 “ stood the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the *Holy of Ho-*
 “ *lies*. And thus the *Desolation* shall continue
 to the End.

B. I blame my self very much, in not having
 read that curious and entertaining Book: I find
 he measur'd the *Place* where the *Temple* stood,
 but cou'd not do it with that Exactness to be
 sure, when he was not allow'd to go upon it.
 Pray, if you'll excuse this Digression, let me
 ask one Question more: Did this ingenious
 Countryman of ours measure the *Circuit* of the
 City? For that, as I take it, was in his Power.

A. It was so; and Mr. *Maundrel* did accor-
 dingly pace the Walls round; and then redu-
 cing his *Paces* to *Yards*, informs us, that his
four thousand six hundred and thirty Paces,
 amounted to *four thousand one hundred and*
sixty-seven Yards, which make just *two Miles* and
 a Half.*

B. I thank you: There's one Thing occurs
 concerning your Historian *Ammianus Marcellinus*,
 which I desire may be further look'd into: You
 gave it me, I remember, as Part of his Character,
 that his Abilities enabled him to make a Diffe-
 rence

* Ibid. p. 110.

rence (though a Heathen) in the Characters of the Orthodox, or *Catholicks*, and the *Arians* at that Time of Day. If he was so strongly attached to his Master *Julian*, who notoriously protected the *Arians*, there's Reason to suspect his Judgment was biased in *their* Favour. But how was it, or is there any Light in his History, as to this Point?

A. There's Light enough in this Matter to shew that he follow'd his own Judgment, and not *that* of his Master; whose Errors, as well as Vices, he sometimes animadverted upon. He had no Relish at all for the *Christian* Religion in general, in what Manner soever profess'd: He uses sometimes very opprobrious Language, and makes it applicable to all Parties amongst them, representing them as a Company of *wild Beasts* in their Disputes with one another; and, like *Gallio*, He car'd for none of those Things: But still his Judgment appears; there's a very remarkable Character given by him, as well of the *Orthodox*, or *Catholick Christians*, as of the Emperor *Constantius*, who was a grievous Persecutor of them. I heartily thank you therefore for reminding me of this Particular; and certainly I should be wanting very much in defending the Cause of *Primitive Christianity*, if I omitted a *Passage*, which so much Sincerity, Honesty, and Plain-Dealing, as is seen in *Marcellinus*, has furnish'd us with in its Favour. Our Historian* then, taking Notice of the Confusion and Irregularities

* Lib. xxi.

committed by *Constantius* in religious Matters; in protecting the *Arians*; in often convening 'em; and by such repeated and irregular Meetings designedly oppressing the *Catholick* Bishops; has these memorable Words; which, as they come from the Mouth of a *Heathen*, not bias'd by *Julian*, but following his own private Judgment, cannot be liable to the least Objection. " *Constantius*, says he, made a strange jumble in religious Matters, by mixing silly superstitious Fancies with the *Christian* Religion; which is a Religion in itself simple, and all of a-piece, without any such Mixture: His Enquiries into the Nature of that Religion, were rather to perplex Debates, than to compose Matters; which frequently occasion'd Divisions and Dissensions amongst them: These Divisions he fomented by *verbal* Altercations, or Disputes about *Words*. Thus he was continually harassing the *Bishops*, who in great Numbers journey'd backwards and forwards, on Account of what they call their *Synods*; where he endeavour'd that his own Will should be a Law: And by this constant Hurry and Fatigue of Beasts, [as well as Men,] the *publick Stages* at last could not hold out any longer.*

B. I

*Christianam Religionem absolutam & simplicem anili superstitione confundens [*Constantius*] in qua scrutanda perplexius quam componenda gravius excitavit dissidia plurima, quæ progressa fufius aluit concertatione verborum, ut *Catervis* Antistitum jumentis publicis ultro citroque discurrentibus per *Synodos*, quas appellant, dum ritum omnem ad suum trahere conatur arbitrium, rei vehiculariæ succideret nervos. *Lib. 21.*

B. I desire to know, what your Historian means by those *verbal* Altercations or Disputes about *Words*, which he charges *Constantius* with, as one Method taken by him to foment *Divisions*?

A. The Meaning is plain enough to such as are vers'd in *Ecclesiastical* History; *Marcellinus*, 'tis easy to apprehend, had an Eye to those two noted Terms of *Homoousios*, i. e. of the *same Substance or Essence*, and *Homoiousios*, i. e. of the *like Substance or Essence*. This Variation of *one Letter* only was made a Handle for distinguishing the *Catholick* from the *Arian*, and was the Occasion of great Distraction and Misery in the *Christian* Church: And here it very well deserves your Observation, where the *Fault* lay, in making such a fatal Distinction amongst *Christians*; for, a great many well-meaning People (to my certain Knowledge) have unwarily been made to believe, that the Fault lay at the Door of the *Orthodox* Party, in coining *new Words*, not to be met with in the *Scriptures*, and multiplying *Creeds*, not serving to any other Purpose than to perpetuate Strife and Discord in the Church. Now, please to observe; *Marcellinus*, as he was a *Greek*, must be allow'd to have understood the *Scriptures* of the *New Testament* in their original Language; and I think, 'tis as little to be doubted, but that his fine Parts, and liberal Education induc'd him to read *them*; if only out of Curiosity, as well as his Master *Julian*; nay, considering the Honesty, Plainness, and Simplicity, that appear'd in *Marcellinus*, I am

am apt to think, he might have surmounted the Difficulties of an unhappy Education, and made a glorious Figure in the *Christian* Church, as other *Heathens* had done before him, had not the violent Dissentions and barbarous Practices which he observ'd amongst the Professors of an excellent Religion, given just Offence, and prov'd the great Stumbling-Block in his Way. We may easily imagine, this was the Case with Thousands as well as *Marcellinus*; and the *Arians* must answer for it, as well as they can: But this by the Way——*Marcellinus* knew, what the *Christian Religion* in it self was, or else he cou'd not have call'd it, as he does here, *Religionem simplicem & absolutam*, which I render a *Religion simple, pure, and unmix'd, and all of a piece*; (and let our *Arians* give a better Translation if they think fit.) *Marcellinus* as plainly distinguishes the *Notions* that *Constantius* had in Religion (which he blended with the *Christian*) as idle silly *Opinions*: So he expressly charges; *confundens christianam religionem anili superstitione*. *Marcellinus* knew that the Word *Ousia*, or *Essence*, was not a Word coin'd by the *Catholicks*; because he found it in the sacred Writings; he knew the *Catholicks* maintain'd (or rather shall we say, he was Judge himself from those Writings?) that the *Father* and the *Son* were there declar'd to be of the *same Essence*; but then he observ'd, that the *Arians* evaded this, in saying, that the *Son* was not of the *same* but of a *like Essence* with the *Father*:

How-

However in the Judgment of *Marcellinus*, we are to reckon *this* was one of *Constantius's* *filly idle Opinions*; and indeed, how can it be esteem'd otherwise by any considerate and unprejudic'd Person? For tho' *Sameness* and *Likeness* are Terms really different, and as *such* are applied to *Things* in general; yet to say, that there is a *Likeness* and not a *Sameness* in the ESSENCE of Things, is, in my Apprehension, little better than meer *Jargon*. For what is *Essence* in the Corporeal World? Does it not arise from the various Contexture of the Parts of a Body? (which Contexture however we are as little able to *explain*, as we are the *Essence* of Incorporeal Beings.) But will it be said, that one Body may be of the *like Essence* with another Body, and yet not of the *same Essence* with that Body? Is not this telling us, that two Bodies may have the very *same* Contexture of Parts, (which constitute their *Essence*,) and yet that they may be only *like* and not really the *same* with one another in such Contexture? Can any Thing be more gross or absurd? And therefore, as we must judge it very improper, to say there may be a *Likeness*, and not a *Sameness* in the ESSENCE of Bodies; so was it highly improper for the *Arians* to use the compound Word *Homoiousios* in their Disputes with the *Catholicks*; for if they would not allow of the *Sameness* of *Essence* in the *Father* and the *Son*; they were told, no doubt, (or at least they ought to have been so,) that *Likeness* of *Essence* is unintelligible Stuff;

nor

nor shou'd any Person presume to question a *Mystery*, who can admit and defend such *Inconsistencies*. 'Tis plain, *Marcellinus's* good Sense quickly discover'd the weak, evasive Arguments in the *Arian* Party; or else he wou'd not have animadverted with that Freedom, as he does, upon the Conduct of *Constantius*, who propagated *these meer VERBAL Disputes*; which he himself must know had nothing of Weight in them, but serv'd his Purpose very well; and that was to oppress the *Catholick* Party: *Excitavit dissidia plurima, quæ progressa fusius aluit concertatione verborum*. Now, what is to be done in this Case, think ye, when the wily Heretick by *deceitful Words* is sapping the very Foundation, or subverting the fundamental Truths of the Gospel, ensnaring many an honest but unguarded Soul by such Devices? Must not the *Church* of Christ assemble, as it did in the Apostle's Days? And when assembled, are they not brought under a Necessity of *explaining*, and using such *Words*, as shall be judg'd most proper to shew the *Falsity* of the *Deceiver*, and thereby to settle People's Minds in the Faith and Doctrine as contain'd in the Holy Scripture? When this is done, private Judgment ought no longer to disturb the Peace of the Church. But if Pride, Arrogance, Discontent, or an Affectation of Singularity (which were always the general Characteristicks of *Heresy*) have at any Time made such Disturbance; the *Church* has been ever justify'd in convening its Members, and explain-

ing

ing their Faith and Doctrines in such a *Manner*, as their Adversaries made it *necessary* for 'em to do. You see then where the *Fault* lay, whilst *Heresy* and *Schism* made such Havock in the *Christian Church*; and whenever the Objection is made to the *Orthodox*, in respect of *Councils*, *Creeds*, and *hard Words* (as they call 'em) it ought to be remember'd by way of Answer, that such *Councils*, *Creeds* and *hard Words* had never been, if *Self-Conceit*, *Pride*, and *Disappointment* had not first of all made the Disturbance, and oblig'd the Governors of the *Christian Church* to do what they did. I thank you for your Patience in hearing me out; and I hope, considering the *natural Application* made of *Marcellinus's Declaration* in favour of the *Orthodox*, no Part of what I have said will be thought a *Digression*.

B. Sir, I am first to thank you, which I do very heartily, for having now fully consider'd our Saviour's *Prophecy* relating to *Jerusalem*; which you readily agree was not done, when we met last; and the *surprising Interposition* of Heaven in blasting the Designs of *Julian*, and being a Truth so well supported on all Sides, gives me very great Satisfaction. Happy, thrice happy were those Thousands you took notice of, *Jew* and *Gentile*, who were immediately *baptiz'd* upon this *wonderful Event*, and thereby had a *new Birth* given 'em, whilst Thousands on the other hand had been just before seeking their own *Death*, and found it in the most ghastly

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Manner.

Manner. The Close of your Discourse has surpriz'd me very much; for I little thought that *Marcellinus* wou'd have gone so far in your Favour, as to the Distinction he makes between the *Orthodox* and the *Arians*; tho' I think your *Historians* are pretty well agreed, that *none* in *Fact* have been greater Persecutors than the *Arians* when in Power; and as to their *Principles*, besides the Inconsistency of such a *Spirit* with *that* of the Gospel, their Notions of *Faith* and *Doctrine* must be very odd, and ill-grounded, when (as *Marcellinus* has remark'd, and you justly enforc'd) they take Refuge in such an idle *verbal* Distinction to support 'em. *Adieu!*

A. Sir, I think we part too soon: Let me observe to you some other Things relating to *Julian*, which are as well attested as the former, and are as much to the Purpose in hand. *Julian* had many *Devices* for extirpating the *Christian* Religion; but they all serv'd to make *more manifest* the Care of Heaven in preserving that *Revelation* which had been made to Mankind by *Jesus Christ*.

B. A few Words engage me to stay longer in this Place, and in such Company: Please then, before you tell me of *Julian's Tricks*, to give me a fair and just Character of him, as to his good or bad Qualities.

A. I think some of the *Fathers* of the *Christian* Church, in this Particular, are to be blam'd; for they drew him in the most frightful Colours; and because they had his Memory in the utmost
Detestation,

Detestation, they forgot or rather refus'd to do him common Justice. He was certainly a Man that lov'd and encourag'd Learning and learned Men: 'Tis plain, 'twas his Delight from his Youth to the Day of his Death. He was regular in his Behaviour, sober, chaste, industrious, liberal and just; his Eloquence and Skill in the *Platonic* Philosophy (which prevail'd at that Time) particularly distinguish'd him, and perhaps it may be truly said, in that Respect he equall'd, if not exceeded his *Master*; or, as he us'd to call him, his dear Brother *Libanius*. He had a brisk lively Genius, free and easy, fertile and copious; the Learning he had acquir'd was polite and curious, his Style smooth and pleasant. This appears from his Writings yet extant; and no where more, than in his Satire upon the *Cæsars*, and his *Misopogon*; which are generally look'd upon as his *Master-Pieces*. Besides all this, it may be justly said of *Julian*, that he was a Man intrepid; he had Courage, and was well vers'd too in the Art of War; of which he gave signal Proof in several Victories that he gain'd. But on the other hand it must be said, and very truly, that perhaps there was not then in the World a more restless, vain, superstitious Person than this same *Julian*; such was the odd Medley in the Composition of this *great wicked* Man! His Fondness or rather Madness for all sorts of *Magick*; for *Augury* or *Soothsaying*; for casting *Nativities*; for *Dreams*, and all sorts of *Divinations*, was incredible; accordingly vast

Numbers of useless Persons (in *Julian's* Opinion) with which *Constantius* had fill'd his *Palace*, were totally discarded, and in their room were plac'd *Philosophers*, *Diviners*, and *Quacks* of all Sorts: There were *two* Persons that had a perfect Ascendant over him, and seem'd to be his absolute Governours, even in the Affairs of the Empire; which were *Maximus* and *Chrysanthus*. There was nothing scarce to be seen or heard any where, but *Altars*, *Sacrifices*, and pronouncing *this* or *that* to be a good or a bad Omen; *Julian* himself was not asham'd sometimes to carry the very *Wood* us'd in such Sacrifices, and to help the old Women light and blow up the sacred Fire; as *Gregory Nazianzen* justly reproaches him; add to this, that he would greedily pry into the *Entrails* of Beasts, thinking to discover how Things wou'd fall out by so doing; and sometimes his detestable Curiosity carried him so far, as *privately* to sacrifice and pry into the *Bowels* of Men themselves. His extravagant Fancies went still farther; he was firmly perswaded within himself, that the Soul of *Alexander the Great* animated his Body; induc'd thereunto by an Opinion (call'd *Metempsychosis*) which with him was as certain and indubitable as any other in the World; and 'tis well known, this was what chiefly inclin'd him to enter into the *Persian War* after the Example of *Alexander the Great*. I think it needless to say any more, touching the Character of this grand *Apostate*, who, as I observ'd to you some Time ago,

took

took on him the sacred Orders, and for some Time officiated in the Church. But the strange Passion he had for *Idolatry*, and for the most ridiculous *Superstitions*, inspir'd him at length with such a Hatred of the *Christian Religion*, that he vow'd its Destruction; and if you please to remember, I told you at the Beginning of this Conference, that when *Julian* came to be sole Master of the Empire, he threw off the Mask, as thinking the Time was come, when he need be no longer upon his Guard in Matters of Religion. But in truth, my good Friend, the Time was rather come, when thro' his Opposition the *Christian Religion* was to shine out in greater Lustre; and as the *Miracles*, on which the *Christian Religion* is built, receiv'd a mighty Confirmation from the Opposition made by *Julian*, in attempting to rebuild the Temple; which has been fully discours'd of already; so the *Doctrine*, *Purity*, and *Holiness* of the *Christian Religion*, (if you are pleas'd to allow me Time,) shall appear to have receiv'd as strong a Confirmation from the *Methods* and *Devices* us'd by *Julian* to establish another Religion in room of the *Christian*.

B. I shall think my Time very well spent, if you proceed and make appear, as you have propos'd.

A. I observe then, that *Julian* for the first twenty Years of his Life, made an open Profession of the *Christian Religion*; and, as I have said already, he was actually a *Clergyman*; so

was

was his Brother *Gallus* too; and both of them read Prayers publickly for some Time, in the Church, as we learn from *Gregory Nazianzen* and *Sozomene*: Nay, *Julian* went so far as the *Tonsure*, and seem'd to be (in Appearance at least) for leading a *Monastick* Life; thereby removing some Umbrage that his Cousin German *Constantius* had taken at his Conduct, and was judg'd to be the best Method for preserving his Life, then thought to be in Danger.

B. Pray what need was there of so much Caution in *Julian*, considering what *Constantius* really was himself?

A. 'Tis true, *Constantius* was an *Arian*; but as great an *Arian* as he was, the *Empire* well knew, that he had dreadful Apprehensions of *Idolatry*; and that he had had a Mistrust of *Julian* for some Time: He watch'd him narrowly for that Reason; and if News had been brought him that *Julian* had turn'd *Apostate*, he wou'd have cut him off infallibly: His Brother *Gallus* had met with the like Fate already, though not upon the Account of Religion.

B. There was an odd *Medley*, as you said just now, in the Composition of this *Julian*; and one wou'd think it not easy to reconcile such different Sentiments in one and the same Person. — But please to proceed, Sir.

A. 'Tis true, at first Sight 'tis not easy to reconcile such different Sentiments in one Person: But mind the Sequel, and you'll find this Matter unriddled plain enough. There were two
grand

grand *Designs* which *Julian* had form'd to himself, as soon as he became sole Master of the Empire; the Execution of which seem'd to have taken up his Thoughts the Remainder of his Days: The one was, to humble the *Persian*, whose growing Power had for some Time been troublesome to the *Romans*; the other was, to extirpate *Christianity* Root and Branch, throughout the whole *Empire*. The better to succeed in this last *Design*, which he had most at heart, he concluded with himself, that quite another Method was to be taken for carrying on such a *Persecution*, than what had been taken by his Predecessors *Dioclesian*, *Decius*, *Maximinus*, *Nero*, and others.

B. These Men did not want Cunning, nor Abilities, you know, for doing Mischief that Way; what then made *Julian* take other Methods?

A. I dare say, you don't question Cunning or Abilities in *Julian*; and a little Reflection will let you see the *Reasons* upon which he concert-ed new Methods of Persecution. He had gain'd a perfect Knowledge of the Principles and Practices of *Christians*; had convers'd a long Time with 'em; more particularly with St. *Basil*, and *Gregory Nazianzen*; and he had thoroughly consider'd, and well weigh'd the Establishment and Progress of *Christianity* in the World, notwithstanding former *Persecutions*. These Things put together, he not only found his Predecessors had judg'd wrong in Point of Policy,

Policy, by taking such *Methods* as they did; but he found himself better qualify'd than *they*, by taking *new* *Methods* for accomplishing the same *Ends*, as they had in View. *Julian's* Philosophy therefore instructed him, that he ought not to proceed with the *Christians* by way of *Pains* and *Penalties*, and *unwholsome Severities*, but rather with a Semblance of *Equity*, *Reason*, and *Moderation*? 'Twas upon these *Principles*, the fertile Genius of *Julian* form'd his *new* Scheme of Persecution; which chiefly turn'd upon *two* *Stratagems*, the *blackest* and most *hellish* in their Nature that cou'd be; and of which the World was not then appriz'd. The *first* was, by secret Practices and underhand Dealings, to bring the *Name* of *Christians* into *Contempt*, as much as possibly he cou'd; sometimes *they* were to be represented as a weak, silly Sort of People; and a Question to be put, Whether they cou'd be cur'd, and yet retain the *Name*; sometimes they were forbid reading *ancient* Authors; whilst *Julian* told 'em, that it shou'd be deem'd sufficient to read *Luke* and *Matthew* in their Churches; *who* also for the Time to come shou'd be call'd *Gallileans*; and as to their Loss of *Places* and worldly Goods, *Julian* alledg'd in his own Defence, that he was putting 'em upon practising *literally* the Gospel, and making the *Way* much easier for 'em to Heaven. The other *Stratagem*, as notable, and as big with Mischief as the former, was, (the better to support *Paganism*, which was declining a-pace) to introduce,

duce, without Loss of Time, into that *Religion*, whatever was remarkably good and commendable in the *Christian*; such Parts of it, as he cou'd not help being affected with himself; and tho' *Gregory Nazianzen* in his Treatise against *Julian*, exposes this Attempt of *Aping* the *Christian*, as absurd and impossible, yet the Matter appear'd otherwise to our *Apostate*; and he seems to have laid the greatest Stress upon this *Stratagem*, as the most likely to work his Ends; and therefore it ran very much in his Head, how he might graft upon *Heathenism* such Branches of *Christianity* as he shou'd think proper.

B. I am much of *Gregory Nazianzen's* Opinion, that *Idol-Worship* and the *Christian* cou'd not stand long together: It must be meer *Infatuation*, indeed, to think of abolishing that *Religion*, which was at the same Time to be made use of to support *another*; and I can't deny, but such a Procedure was giving fresh *Evidence* for the *Truth* of that *Religion* he was opposing. But pray let me hear how he went on with this wild Project.

A. There's a noted Saying, you know, that when Heaven is determin'd to punish, the Prelude often is *Infatuation*. *Julian* was minded to establish amongst the *Pagans* not only the Order and outward *Discipline* of the *Christian* Church, but its *Morals*, *Maxims*, and *Virtues*, that more peculiarly adorn'd it. Among all the practical Parts, he labour'd most, that the *Heathens* shou'd copy after, or imitate the *Christians*

in *Hospitality*; in the Care they took of burying their Dead; in *Charity*; in *Purity* of Manners, and in *Modesty*; which were *Graces* that distinguished the *Christian* from the rest of Mankind. *Julian's* Letter to *Arsacius*, Sovereign Pontiff of *Galatia*, directing how he and his Priests shou'd behave in these Matters, is well worthy our reading: I should perhaps, be thought tedious, should I repeat the whole; which is here in my *Collection of Testimonies*: You may see it at your Leisure amongst *Julian's* Works yet extant: You will likewise find Part of a second Letter to some other *Pontiff* (not nam'd) which equally deserves your Notice.

B. Did not *Julian*, the latter End of his Days, write a Book professedly against the *Divinity of Jesus Christ*? I think he did. I have heard some say, that the *Book* was never answer'd; and that the *Orthodox* Party industriously suppress'd as much as they could of it. Pray deal ingenuously with me, how stands that Affair? I fear, your *Cause* won't be much the better, in answering this Question?

A. A great deal better, I do assure you, before I have done with it: Nor should I have fail'd taking Notice of what you now propose, before we had parted. 'Tis very true, *Julian* (some say *Maximus* the Philosopher) did write such a Book, as you mention, full of Spite and Malice against the Person of *Christ*; and our present Set of *Deists* and *Libertines* are often out of Humour, because all the *Venom* of that Book has not

been

been transmitted to them ; and they are apt to fancy sometimes, that their *Cause* suffers very much for want of it : Now as to their charging this *Loss* upon the *Orthodox* or *Catholick* Party, they may as well charge them with the *Loss* of that great Number of Books which *Photius* has given an Account of in his *Bibliothèque* : We have there *Extracts* only, and are forc'd to sit down contented with the *Loss* of the Books themselves : But there is less Reason to complain in regard to *Julian's* Book ; for as the Book was fully answer'd by St. *Cyrill*, and is still extant, so we see *Julian's* Arguments all the Way quoted ; and 'tis unreasonable after that, to suggest, that *Cyril* has not done Justice to *Julian* in such Quotations, or that he has not consider'd all the main Objections brought by him against the *Person* of *Christ*. The End and Design then of *Julian's* Book, as it appears, was to prove that our Saviour was a *meer* Man, like other Folks, inferiour in all Respects to the *Demi-Gods* and *Pagan Heroes* ; and that *honest John* (as the *Apostate* had learnt to talk) was the first, that took it into his Head to give him the Name of *God*, &c. And yet this very *Book* (so it happens) furnishes us, in a few Words, with very substantial *Evidence* for the Truth of our Religion : For *Julian*, at the same Time that he inveighs bitterly against the *Divinity* of *Christ*, dares not *deny* the *Miracles* of *Christ*, but, without any Examination, admits them to be true and real *Facts* ; what he only labours at, is to lessen the Idea conceived of

them, and to obviate, as to their Consequences, by roundly asserting in a magisterial Manner, that such *Facts* were far exceeded by those of their *Heroes* and *Pagan Gods* : And indeed, how could *Julian* undertake to prove the *Falsity* of such *Miracles* of our Saviour, without giving the *Lye* at the same Time to *two Persons*, whose Works he highly valued, and often copy'd after 'em? I mean *Celsus* and *Porphyry* ; who, both of them, in the warmest and bitterest Discourses which they writ against *Jesus Christ*, in the *second* and *third* Centuries, always acknowledg'd such a *superior Power* to have been in Him, as would sometimes put the very *Laws of Nature* out of Order, says *Celsus* ;* and at other Times make even the *Gods themselves* give way to him, says *Porphyry*. And there was Reason enough for their making such Acknowledgments : For every Thing concurr'd for raising and fixing such an *Idea* of *Christ* in People's Minds. His *wonderful Works* were fresh in a *traditionary* Way ; There were publick Monuments ; there was the *Letter of Tiberius* ; and there were the *Archives*, or publick *Records* at *Rome*, which, as *Tertullian* assures us, attested these Things in the *second* Century : Add to this the wonderful Rapidity, with which the *Christian* Religion spread itself over the Earth ; and the *Fame* of our Saviour's Disciples working such *Miracles*, as seem'd to exceed those of their Master, agreeable to what is said in the *Gospel* : *Greater Things than these shall they do*. And thus, you

* Orig. Lib. 7. Contra Celsum.

you see, how much *Good* out of the *Evil* (intended by *Julian*) accru'd to the *Church* of *Christ*. *Julian*, in short, *run-riot*, as we say, in these Designs for subverting *Christianity*; and one *Historian** (amongst others) whose *Time* of *living* enabled him to be *Witness* of the very *Fact*, assures us, that *Julian's* Rage carried him so far as to deface and pull down a fine *Statue* of our blessed Saviour, that had stood above *three hundred Years*; and afterwards set up his *own* in the Room of it.

B. Such a remarkable *Fact* naturally leads me to ask you, how it stands recorded by that *Historian*?

A. This memorable *Statue* was erected at *Cæsarea Philippi* by the *Woman* that had received such signal Mercies from the *Son* of *God*, when she was cur'd of her *Bloody-Flux*. This *Statue* she plac'd before the Gate of her own House, and was minded in such a *Manner* to transmit to *Posterity* her *Gratitude* and her *Faith*: The *Statue* was of *Metal*; the *Portraiture*, it seems, natural and lively; a long *Mantle* thrown about him; and his *Hand* stretch'd forth to the *Woman* prostrate and imploring his Assistance; and beneath, on the *Pedestal*, was a *Phenician* Inscription, setting forth in a few Words the *miraculous Cure*; which Inscription the *Christians* had taken Care to brighten and clear up, when by the Length of Time it had been disfigured.

B. Sir, my Affairs make the Time of parting now

* *Euseb. Eccl. Hist. Lib. vii. c. 18.* Citatur hic *Eusebii* Locus in vii Synodo. Vide quæ narrat *Philostorgius*, Lib. vii. c. 3. & ex illo *Nicephorus*. Vales in Annot.

now necessary : I must leave the Country to-morrow ; but shall return in a few Days, and will then soon pay my Respects to you again : But before I go, I must remind you of one Thing, that you just hinted in our *first Conference*,* and which I desire may not be forgot, when we meet again : 'Tis concerning that merry Fellow *Lucian*, whose *Dialogues*, you said, sometimes served to exhilarate and keep up the Spirits of our *Fraternity* : Perhaps in that you judge right ; and I begin to think such *Cordials* are deceitful : But what I mean, is this, that *Lucian*, you said, *had unawares given a Testimony to one of the greatest Mysteries of our Religion*. Let this be the *Topick*, if you please, to be first considered, when I next give myself the Pleasure in waiting on you.

A. It is well remember'd ; and I'll immediately mark it down in the *Collection* for that Purpose. Give me Leave, before we shake Hands, to offer a few Words, by way of Advice. You say, you are going out of the Country ; it may be very improper, perhaps, for me to ask what *Company* may probably engage you ; but if it be any of your *new Fraternity*, let me exhort you to be very cautious how you converse with them, otherwise than your Affairs in Life may make it necessary so to do. I think, you have already seen, for the little Time we have spent together this last Month, just Reason to believe the *Gospel of Christ* ; for you have had *solid Evidence* given you, and more you may still expect from me,
for

for the *Truth* of *Christianity*; and the Arguments that have been us'd, seem to have made a happy Impression on you: But remember, that it behoves every *Christian*, though ever so well establish'd upon just Grounds, in the *Faith* of the *Gospel*, not rashly to expose themselves to *Temptation*; as you certainly do, if you mingle your self at every Turn in a free Conversation with such, whose *Principles* you know are directly opposite to your own. I make no Question but that there are many in the World, who fancy themselves settled in the *Principles* of their Religion; and yet, by frequently conversing with those, whose Wit and Learning are for giving every Thing a Turn in favour of *Infidelity*, have sometimes found their *Faith* shaken. You can't promise your self, that a prophane Jest, some subtil Objection, some witty Burlesque on any Part of the *Bible*, shall not weaken your Belief, and make an unlucky Impression on your Spirits, when perhaps you have not an *Answer* ready at hand to ward off the Force of these Things. But whenever the Providence of *God* plainly calls you into such sort of *Company*, as it may be often your Case; take care that no little *Cavils*, that may be rais'd against particular Passages in the *Bible*, intangle your Thoughts, or shake your Faith; rather recollect, and keep your Mind intent upon the plain Force of Argument drawn from *Miracles* and *Prophecies*, in the Manner it has been hitherto discours'd of between us; think often, how much safer you are in the

Profession

Profession and Practice of *Christianity*, than if you should relinquish the *Gospel*, and change it into mere *Natural Religion*, which you seem'd some Time ago to be so fond of. You see that the *Doctrine* of *Christ* contains every Thing in it which *Natural Religion* pretends to discover: But your *Dissals* deny those very Parts of *Christianity* which are necessary to supply the Defects of the *Lights* of *Nature*. The Condition, indeed, of such Men, is dismal: The Charge is heavy, but very just, as a pious and learned Writer has lately drawn it up against 'em. "They deny the
 "Atonement of *Christ*; and the Pardon of Sin
 "through the Virtue of such Atonement; they
 "deny *Jesus* to be the great Prophet, and the Sa-
 "viour of Mankind: Whereas he himself has told
 "us by Commission from the Father, *If ye believe*
 "*not that I am he, ye shall die in your Sins.*"
 What a Blessing, think ye, must such Subjects be in a *Christian Country*? And so, my good Friends, I take my Leave of you!

B. I heartily thank you for this good Advice and serious Application; and I hope, by the divine Assistance, to make a right Use of both.

* See Dr. Wain's Covenant against Inidelity.

FINIS.